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FIGURING MADNESS: NINETEENTH-CENTURY FICTION AND SEMIOTIC DIMENSIONS OF MADNESS

BY

©

CHRISTINE S. WIESENTHAL

A thesis

submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Figuring Madness: Nineteenth-Century Fiction and Semiotic Dimensions of Madness" submitted by Christine S. Wiesenthal in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Dr. J. Goldstein

Date 9/19/92

DEDICATION

In memory of my mother and father

"All thought is but a memory of a gratification"

- Freud

ABSTRACT

This study draws upon a diverse range of nineteenth-century British and American prose fiction to explore the related problems of the representation and interpretation of literary signs and symptoms of madness. More narrowly, it focuses upon some of the linguistic, corporal, and psychical manifestations associated with the eruption of the unconscious in selected prose works by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Jane Austen, Anthony Trollope, Wilkie Collins, and Henry James, amongst others. From a representational standpoint, the argument attempts not only to elucidate what the literary symptom "means"--to examine its "special communicatory powers" from historical and theoretical perspectives--but also to show how it means: how it functions as a vital rhetorical entity within the text, especially in metaphorical and metonymic capacities, and how it as often as not also entails the dynamic interrelation of different signifying modalities, intersemiotic processes foregrounded in analyses of texts such as Trollope's He Knew He Was Right, Collins's Heart and Science, and James' The Turn of the Screw. Moreover, as works such as "Love and Freindship" (sic) and "The Yellow Wallpaper" also serve to illustrate, literary forms of disorder presuppose the reader's active rhetorical involvement with the very modes of "madness" diagnosed "in" literature. Readerly participation in what Shoshana Felman has termed "the madness of rhetoric" points to one way in which madness effectively resists definitive attempts to delimit it. In this respect, nineteenth-century fiction compels readers to explore the implications of their engagement with a form of a madness acted out in language, to trace, in their own writing, the surreptitious re-presentation of symptoms similar to those depicted by the authors

under consideration. To begin to comprehend the madness of nineteenth-century fiction, therefore, is necessarily to grapple with the question of how readers also finally figure in some form of the very contradictions and delusions they strive to figure out.

The methodology of this study reflects its concerns with the nineteenth-century science of psychiatric symptomatology and contemporary psychoanalytic semiotics, combining more traditional psychoanalytic and historicist approaches to literature with the poststructuralist strategies and insights of Lacanian critics such as Shoshana Felman.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: FIGURING MADNESS

> The phenomenon of madness is not separable from the problem of signification for being in general.
>
> - Jacques Lacan, The Language of the Self, 1968

> What is the meaning of the intrusion of pathology into the very discourse of the novel? What is at stake in literature is meaning; but a madman's speech is *a priori* meaningless; at any rate, it is unreadable, incomprehensible. Madness integrated into literature immediately raises the question of how the unreadable can as such be read: How and why does nonsense produce sense?
>
> - Shoshana Felman, Writing and Madness, 1985

> But one morning, turning to pass the doubloon, [Ahab] seemed to be newly attracted to the strange figures and inscriptions stamped on it, as though for the first time beginning to interpret for himself in some monomaniacal way whatever significance might lurk in them. And some certain significance lurks in all things, else all things are little worth, and the round globe itself but an empty cipher.
>
> - Melville, Moby-Dick, 1851

This project began as a study of semiotic dimensions of madness in nineteenth-century fiction--as an exploration of some of the symptomatic linguistic, corporal, and psychical phenomena conventionally associated with the eruption of the unconscious in literature. And to an extent, the scope and focus of the present study still bear out that initial conception. Drawing upon texts from Jane Austen's "Love and Freindship" near the turn of the nineteenth century, to Henry James's The Turn of the Screw at the turn of the next, I will explore a diverse selection of burlesque, serio-comic, realist, and romance narratives, as well as such popular nineteenth-century sub-genres as the domestic melodrama and the

psychological ghost story, with an eye to their various means of representing manifestations of psychopathology--or what that most ambiguous of "madwomen" in Mary Braddon's Lady Audley's Secret terms the "diagnostics of madness": the "appalling" "signs and tokens" of "mental aberration."[1]

Such a concern with the very forms in which madness presents itself in literature, however, also presupposes a fundamental question: namely, is it feasible to speak of the literary representation of symptoms of madness without also, at some point, touching upon the closely interrelated issue of interpretation? Within a non-literary context of "Semiology and Medicine" in general, this point has been cogently addressed by Roland Barthes in the past. "What is the symptom from a semiotic point of view?" he asks. According to Barthes, the "crude fact" of a symptom alone does not, a priori, "involv[e] the idea of signification." It is only when manifestations of disease come to be "supplemented by the physician's organizing consciousness" and by "the mediation of language" entailed by diagnostic discourse that the symptom is, in effect, "transformed" into a sign, into a semiotic event (204-05). While not all would concur with the distinction Barthes thus draws between signs and symptoms,[2] his argument is suggestive in relation to a literary study such as mine inasmuch as it points up the similarly "supplementary" role of the reader as the "interpretant" of fictive signs of madness: as a catalyst whose "organizing consciousness" likewise processes manifestations of pathology into meaningful data. In this regard, my own pursuit of semiotic dimensions of madness has evolved to encompass a dualistic concern with interpretative as well as representational processes, with both

authorial depictions of disorder and the "deciphering labour" (Barthes 204) which we, as literary critics, must invest in any attempt to make sense of the symptoms of non-sense. How the enigmatic--and, often, "appalling"--forms of madness are enfigured by texts and figured out by readers: such will constitute my twofold concern in the following study.

With respect to the representational dimensional of my subject, a basic purpose of the chapters which follow is to explore the significance of specific manifestations of disorder from historical, mythopoetic, and psychoanalytic perspectives. For "it is the multimodal, polysemous nature of the illness sign," as Kathryn Vance Staiano remarks, "its special communicatory powers, its mythical and metaphorical qualities, which have through the centuries most intrigued and provoked us" (Interpreting Signs 1). And such capacity to "intrigue" is, perhaps, especially "provoked" by literary portrayals of madness, which, as Lillian Feder reminds us, are invariably and uniquely endowed with an "inherent aesthetic order" and "intrinsic value and meaning" (9). Above all, because they often manifest themselves as iconic and symbolic vectors of multiply allusive registers, symptoms of psychopathology in literature embody "special communicatory powers" that invite the paradoxical pursuit of meaning in madness.

At the same time, though, this thesis aims to pursue the question of not only what the symptom means, but also how it means: how it functions as a rhetorical entity within the literary text--especially in metaphorical and metonymic capacities. For importantly, as figural devices, literary symptoms of madness effect both the subversion and the production of meaning. By examining them in relation to post-Freudian

conceptions of the rhetoricity of the unconscious and its primary processes, the principles determining the successful transmission, or, conversely, the short-circuiting of sense within narratives of madness become more fully apparent. Similarly, the metaphorical value of the symptom in literature is also dynamic in the additional sense that it very often inscribes a process of intersemiotic translation: that "somewhat magical" phenomenon of the transformation or even "transubstantiation" between various orders of signs (David-Ménard 27).[3] As the symptoms of the melancholy body or the spectral apparition in the works of Anthony Trollope and Henry James will serve to illustrate, for example, manifestations of disorder in nineteenth-century texts as often as not signal an active interrelation of such signifying orders as I have evoked in the organization of my study, thus problematizing the notion of the symbolic, the organic, or the psychical as entirely stable and discrete categories.

Embracing as it does, however, an interpretive as well as a representational facet, the activity of figuring madness also presages the erosion or destabilization of another, perhaps even more fundamental, categorical boundary. For to the extent that literary signs of disorder involve the reader's active participation in the very forms and modes of madness presented by texts, they ultimately call into question the commonplace assumption that, as Shoshana Felman has recently argued, the madness we analyze "in" literature is indeed a phenomenon in effect actually containable <u>to</u> the literary text, as though an event somehow intrinsically separate or apart from the reader "outside" it.[4] Felman's incisive retheorization of the relationship between literature and madness (1982, 1985) will constitute the basis

for my own exploration, in some of the chapters to follow, of how the nineteenth-century literature of madness, as a semiotic phenomenon, comprehends us even (or especially) as we may begin to comprehend it. In more ways than one, the dualistic process of figuring madness turns the binary logic of insides and outsides inside out, so that in tracing the tell-tale signs and symptoms of delirium, the sense of one's own disorientation may easily become the commonest sense of all.

In fact, bearing in mind the real discomforts apt to beset disoriented readers, I should like to shift to the medical and psychoanalytic contexts informing my approach, before pursuing the foregoing points any further. This semiotic study draws as its frame of reference upon the related yet distinct traditions of the medical science of symptomatology (or semiology), and the linguistic study of signs, as it has been developed within the fields of psychoanalysis and psycholinguistics by theorists such as Roman Jakobson and Jacques Lacan. For the purposes of this thesis, these parallel traditions may be usefully outlined in terms of a historical continuum, in which the shift from a medical to a psychoanalytic conception of the symptom is registered as a transition from an essentially "denotative" to a "connotative" interpretive model (Baer, Semiotic Approaches 4), and, simultaneously, as a movement from a metonymic to a fundamentally metaphorical diagnostic value and technique.

As a medical practice, semiology, or "techne semeiotike, a craft having to do with signs," involves the study of "how humans communicate by way of symptoms" (Baer, Medical Semiotics 1, 114), a branch of medicine reaching back as far as Hippocrates. In the nineteenth century, medical semiology, and the nascent field of psychiatric

symptomatology, in particular, coincided perhaps most notably with the pseudo-science of physiognomy, the doctrine of the putative "consonance of body and character" popularized in the preceding century by Johann Caspar Lavater (McMaster, Index of the Mind 15). Relying upon the essentially "descriptive scheme" characteristic of the period's approach to the medical "science of forms" (Heinroth 145), studies of madness by such prominent figures as Charles Bell, Alexander Morison, and Crichton Browne shared the crucial presupposition "that the mad," as Janet Browne remarks, "generally possessed a distinctive physiognomy separating them from the sane" (154). "Every face of man or woman," wrote John Conolly in the 1850s, for example, "becomes more and more a book in which the life and thoughts are written in hieroglyphics, to be deciphered by those who have acquired skill in such reading." And in the faces and bodies of the insane, he continued, the "strange writings" and "impressions" of the passions are "generally all at once and curiously modified," "so that [a mad] man's whole exterior becomes indicative of his interior commotion or of his disordered state of mind" ("Physiognomy of Insanity" 208-10).

Insofar as it sought assiduously to establish positive laws or "constant relations and necessary connexions" governing the "internal qualities of things and their external character,"[5] medical semiology of the age concerned itself predominantly with the task of translating symptoms of disease as indexical signs--as "natural signs," that is, "with naturally fixed referents" based on a deterministic causal relationship (Staiano, Interpreting Signs 5). And as such, the interpretative efforts of the period may be characterized, in the terms of Eugen Baer, as belonging to a "denotative semiotic system": an

"ideally monoreferential" diagnostic approach focusing upon "single, univocal references of signs or groups of signs" with the "general goal" of "scientific exactitude" (Semiotic Approaches 4).

In their quest for definitive causal referents underlying the objective phenomena of mental disorder, nineteenth-century medical men also increasingly channelled considerable descriptive and observational energies into mapping and charting the sequential patterns and recurrent concatenations of symptoms associable with various species of "mixed" or "pure" insanities. Physicians such as Crichton Browne and Johann Christian Heinroth, a mid-century Leipzig semiologist, erected increasingly complex symptomatological taxonomies, fastidiously arranged according to order, genus, species, and sub-species, by which they claimed to be able to discern even highly specific and composite varieties of mental maladies--despite the acknowledged "unpredictable variations" arising from "the individual character of the patient and the concurrence of chance circumstances" (Heinroth 165).[6] Today, perhaps the best known such classificatory endeavor was the attempt by the renowned late-century French neurologist, Jean-Martin Charcot, to schematize and itemize the hysteric's dramatic and protean repertoire of symptoms. Charcot categorized the hysterical fit into four distinct phases which, as he believed, "follow one another with the regularity of a mechanism."[7] As Jan Goldstein observes, "Charcot's much-hailed scientific achievement was to have found an orderly array" to the mystifying disorder of hysteria, the method to its madness. "In other words, he had gained cognitive control over the disease . . . by subsuming it under positive laws" ("Uses of Male Hysteria" 153). Indeed, the implicit aim of "cognitive control" over mental illness

underwrites the taxonomical fervor of nineteenth-century semiology in general. In actuality, however, as we shall see with regard to the ambiguous status of the spectral apparition in Chapter Six, the classification and import of symptoms were sticking points on which most medical writes of the age agreed mainly to disagree.

What is especially pertinent to the context of the present study, however, is the extent to which contemporary semiologists, in their preoccupation with the succession and order of forms of disease, recurrently formulated analogies between medical and linguistic signs. To be sure, cursory comparisons of the symptom to a form of "hieroglyphi[c]" writing (Conolly, "Physiognomy of Insanity" 208), or "dumb discoursive [sic] . . . language" (Maudsley, Pathology of Mind 290) abound; but in other instances the linguistic metaphor is more thoroughly and intriguingly developed. In his Outlines of a Pathological Semeiology,[8] for instance, A. F. Schill maintained that

> [t]he isolated symptoms which constitute a disease may well be compared to the letters of the alphabet placed before the eyes of a man who sees them without combining them; so far they have no value or import. But when they are put together, when the vowels are combined with the consonants so as to form syllables, when these again are joined so as to constitute words, the whole being combined [then] forms phrases and sentences. It is precisely the same with . . . symptoms; it is only by combining them in different ways that we succeed in deducing from them signs calculated to discover to us the nature of the disease, the dangers with which it is connected, and the hopes we may entertain of its termination. (11)[9]

More than a superficial comparison, Schill's extended analogy offers an important insight into the systemic structural correspondence between medical and linguistic signs, and the way we read them. In essence, he advocates a model of medical diagnosis more or less explicitly based upon principles of linguistic morphology and syntax. His emphasis upon

the physician's ability to read a configuration of symptoms by "combining" or "put[ting] together" component parts--to perceive the relations between individual signs that would remain incoherent to one uninitiated to the "foreign alphabet" of medical semiology (11-12)--corresponds, in fact, to the commonplace opposition of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations that govern, as Saussure was later to perceive, the way we read language. While paradigmatic relations refer to "the level of virtual oppositions between a sign and its various neighbors" (Barthes 206), "almost all units of language depend on what surrounds them in the spoken chain or on their successive parts," and the combinatory means by which they "acquire value . . . through their reciprocal action in a higher unit" refers to their syntagmatic dimension (Saussure 127-28). Syntagmatic relations thus entail "several signs being read at the same time . . . successively throughout time," and, as Barthes has reiterated, long after Schill, this clearly constitutes "the essential part of medical semiology":

> [H]ere we recognize the same hierarchy as in linguistics . . . where what seems most important finally, is not the paradigmatic, although this may be actually what has been discovered first, but the syntagmatic; it is, under the name of syntax, the part of linguistics which is most developed . . . . medical syntagmatics would therefore be the functioning of the sign by a combinatory operation. (207)

What Barthes fails to note, however, is that medicine's emphasis upon such syntactical "combinatory operations" suggests an essentially metonymical approach to reading symptoms, for the linguistic processes of "combination" and "contexture" align themselves fundamentally with the principle of "contiguity," as Roman Jakobson observes (61). In attempting to link the symptoms of diseases into a coherent sequence or "sentence"-like signifying chain, nineteenth-century semiologists such

as Schill or Charcot disclose a literally prosaic conception of interpreting pathology.

By thus postulating a model of "medical syntagmatics," medical writers of the nineteenth century perhaps reified their sense of conceptual control over disease by underscoring the idea of manifestations of pathology as the outcome of stable, regular, and logical laws of configuration. But with the advent of psychoanalysis in the late century, both the medical understanding of the symptom as a monoreferential (or "denotative") sign, and the metonymic medical method of decoding it, come to be supplemented by a radically different epistemology. Indeed, as opposed to the "naturally fixed" organic referents for which Charcot and earlier psychophysiologists had sought, the theory first advanced by Breuer and Freud of the psychical "mechanism of symbolization"[10] underlying the genesis of hysterical symptoms--a phenomenon I will later examine in more detail in relation to Wilkie Collins's Heart and Science--established the nature of the psychoanalytic symptom as a non-indexical, psychic entity: a sign not inevitably or logically determined by internal physical factors, but rather, in Freud's term, overdetermined by a multiplicity of non-linear, polysemous emotional associations. In this respect, as Kathryn Staiano remarks, the psychoanalytic symptom represents an "artificially coded mode of expression" or an "artificial sign with no fixed referents" (Interpreting Signs 5). By the same token, insofar as it focuses "on personal associations and interpretations in response to signs," the psychoanalytic conception of the symptom may also be said to signal a "multireferential" "connotative orientation" (Baer, Semiotic Approaches 4). Whereas nineteenth-century medicine constructed and read the

symptom of mental disorder in terms of a univocal sentence, psychoanalysis approached the same manifestations according to the more unstructured and plurisignificatory paradigm of a crossword puzzle or rebus.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding the critical semiotic insights achieved by the Studies on Hysteria and Freud's subsequent work, "traditional psychoanalysis," as Anthony Wilden notes, never explicitly concerned itself "with the problems of linguistics and semiotics":

> Psychoanalysis is indeed the 'talking cure', but in spite of all Freud's discussions of language, and in spite of the semiotic and graphic metaphors which run through his work, the symbolism of the dream and the symptom has not generally been considered as a question of communication. (31)

As Wilden suggests, it is mainly the work of Jacques Lacan that has been responsible for the modern discovery of "the semiotic Freud" (5). And no doubt, despite the highly contentious, willfully unreadable, and very problematic nature of much of this theorist's work,[11] Lacan's most valuable and enduring contribution to post-Freudian psychoanalysis has been his appropriation and modification of the linguistic theory developed by Ferdinand de Saussure to explain the functioning of the unconscious.[12] As we shall see in the next chapter, Lacan's central dictum that "the unconscious is structured like a language" is a formula open to debate and refinement. But nevertheless, his general conviction that, as Elizabeth Grosz states, "linguistics and semiotics are necessary for an understanding of the unconscious" is a premise of basic importance to this study. As Grosz explains,

> [Lacan] regards the contents of the unconscious as signifiers; the primary processes the unconscious relies upon to express and distort itself--i.e. condensation and displacement--he represents in terms of [Roman] Jakobson's notion of metaphor

> and metonymy; and the subsidiary means of unconscious expression he defines by the rhetorical devices outlined by Quintillian. (92)

Lacan's notion of the language-like operations of the unconscious--or of the rhetorical style of the unconscious, really--also entails a final conceptual shift to an overtly metaphorical understanding of the symptom. The structure of the metaphorical figure, he observes, involves a form of word-for-word substitution (as opposed to the "word-to-word connexion [upon which] metonymy is based") (Écrits 157, 156). In this "superimposition" of one signifier on another, absent or occulted term, Lacan perceives "the very mechanism by which the symptom, in the analytic sense, is determined"--"the symptom being," he adds, "a metaphor in which flesh or function is taken as a signifying element" (Ecrits 166). And while metaphor thus becomes "simply the synonym for the symbolic displacement brought into play in the symptom" (Écrits 51), the device of metonymy is associated by Lacan with the contiguous symbolic displacements of "unconscious desire" (Écrits 167).[13] It is in the sense that symptom formations of the unconscious function according to processes of signification essentially homologous to our daily conscious experience of language that Lacan, then, can conclude: "the phenomenon of madness is not separable from the problem of signification for being in general--that is, from the problem of Language for man" (Language of the Self 136n).

Nineteenth-century medical theory and contemporary psychoanalytic semiotics will intertwine throughout the following chapters, which approach the question of literary "diagnostics of madness" through methods of traditional historical and psychoanalytic analysis combined with the poststructuralist strategies and insights of Lacanian critics

such as Shoshana Felman. Part I of this study begins, more specifically, with a consideration of linguistic manifestations of madness in two very disparate first-person fictional narratives: Charlotte Perkins Gilman's classic feminist response to the nineteenth-century "Rest Cure," "The Yellow Wallpaper"; and Jane Austen's (not quite so classic, but delightful nonetheless) juvenile response to the eighteenth-century novel of sensibility, "Love and Freindship." In these early chapters, I undertake an initial exploration of some of the means by which authors and readers negotiate the representational and interpretative liabilities invariably associated with first-person articulations of the "unheard-of contradictions" of madness.

My reading of Gilman's short story examines the metaphorical value and function of the yellow wallpaper as a figuration of "delirious discourse"--that is, of the very symptom of madness so markedly absent in the curiously coherent style of Gilman's increasingly disturbed journal-writing protagonist. On both pragmatic and theoretical levels, Gilman's wallpaper can be seen to operate as an effective and sophisticated solution to the problems of unintelligibility raised by the prospect of signifying psychosis from a subjective perspective. On the other hand, by contrast with Gilman's neat narrative displacement of the "language" of madness, Austen's ebullient burlesque, "Love and Freindship," directly confronts the reader with a "mad" style that more unequivocally resists interpretation: a style of wild metonymic connections and conceptual discontinuity that tends to defy precisely the sort of constructive "combinatory operations" through which nineteenth-century semiologists attempted to read pathology. Indeed, the continual locomotions of meaning effected by Austen's prose style

compel the reader to participate in the "madness" of the text's linguistic play: rather like Austen's heroines, we find ourselves "running mad" after the sense of disjointed sentences, perpetually outpaced by lines that dash on ahead of us. And while the interplay of the mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy can reveal much of "the method that presides over the discourse of meaninglessness" (Felman, WM 106), Austen's text may ultimately be viewed as the narrative vehicle of a "madness of rhetoric," in Shoshana Felman's term: of a ceaselessly active nonsense that is always already beyond the sense of consciousness, and that ceases the moment we attempt to grasp its meaning as such.

From the question of subjective, linguistic representations of madness, the middle section of the thesis shifts to focus upon objective manifestations of corporal symptoms--and particularly, to a consideration of the bodily signs associated with melancholic and hysterical disorders by Anthony Trollope, in He Knew He Was Right, and by Wilkie Collins, in Heart and Science. As with Austen's juvenilia, both of these novels have been conventionally accorded a second-string status in relation to their authors' "major" works, such as Trollope's Barchester Towers, for example, or Collins's bestselling The Woman in White. Yet I have chosen to treat each of these texts at some length, not only because I feel they merit more critical attention generally, but also because each of them develops the metaphoricity of the symptom in a multidimensional manner that is equally compelling from historical, psychoanalytic, and narrative points of view.

The texts of Trollope and Collins are fundamentally similar in that their respective assimilations of the signs of melancholy and hysteria

tap into the highly evocative historical and mythopoetic legacies of these ancient disease entities. In He Knew He Was Right, for example, Trollope depicts a sadomasochistic cycle of melancholic sorrow and bodily sufferance that draws powerfully upon both Christian iconology and medical semiology from the Renaissance to the Victorian period. More problematic, but also suggestive, is Collins's treatment of female hysteria in Heart and Science, which entails a tentative reclamation of a feminine--and proto-feminist--past, reaching back, in mythical time, to the legend of Demeter and Persephone.

But as metaphorical figurations of pathology, the melancholy and hysterical bodies presented by these texts also suggest the dynamic interrelation of the symbolic with the ostensibly "non-verbal" corporal realm--a phenomenon not only of significance in relation to the bodies represented in the texts, but also in relation to the textual bodies themselves, the very forms of these narratives of disorder. The climactic, corporal realization of the hysterical symptom in Collins's text, for example, proves a striking intersemiotic event that, in effect, scenically literalizes a root metaphor of the "wandering womb" once associated with the malady. But this (melo)dramatic instance of words made flesh through a process of hysterical symbolization does not, ultimately, constitute the only hysterical symptom of note. After the manner of what Mary Jacobus has dubbed "the hysterical narrative" (197ff), Collins's own textual body can be seen to reproduce signs of the very neurosis it enfigures, summarily repressing and eliding, as it finally does, all the mnemic traces of the maternal past it first evokes. In Trollope's novel, similarly, the melancholy body also discloses itself as a construct that transcends the physiological body

of the melancholy man, Louis Trevelyan, to encompass a purely figural dimension of "fictive" signs unanchored to any objective referents. Rather than participating in aspects of the disorder it represents like Heart and Science, though, Trollope's writing about melancholy may, ultimately, signal quite the contrary, with the textual body inscribing a symbolic counter against the melancholy of which it speaks. In the context of Julia Kristeva's recent theoretical work on depressive disorder and its impact upon processes of signification and symbolization, I will consider in Chapter Four the relationship--perhaps uniquely inimical--between melancholia and representation.

Chapters Six and Seven, in the final portion of this study, concern themselves more narrowly with one specific phenomenon closely associated with madness in fiction of the nineteenth century: the ghost, spirit, or spectral apparition. If only for the most obvious reason that such signs frequently occupy an ambiguous status in literature, as either subjective and delusory projections of the psyche, or as objectively based perceptions, often connected to the supernatural, phantasmal manifestations register in a particularly profound way another level of indeterminacy between the inside and out. While in some fictional instances, such as Wilkie Collins's short story "Mad Monkton," or Henry James's The Turn of the Screw, the spectres that may signify pathology remain mysteries to the end, other narratives--Charlotte Brontë's Villette, for example, or Collins's The Woman in White--ultimately provide readers with rationalist accounts for manifestations of the uncanny. Inasmuch as both these types of apparition narratives explore spectral phenomena from the subjective, psychological point of view of a ghost-seer led to question his or her own sanity, they are as relevant

to the present study as more unambiguous representations of morbid hallucination--such as that presented, for instance, by Gilman in "The Yellow Wallpaper."

The ambiguous status of the spectral apparition in nineteenth-century fiction is further compounded by the subtle interplay of such spirit manifestations with both linguistic and corporal signifying modalities. In "Anti-Bodies of Disease and Defense," I focus particularly upon the spirit-body dyad, exploring the period's pervasive fascination with spectral apparitions, from a psychohistorical perspective, as a symptomatic expression of a latent nervous dis-ease, a "realistic anxiety" largely attributable to the nineteenth century's collective physiological vulnerability before a deadly new wave of epidemic diseases. As texts such as Melville's Moby-Dick and Dickens's Bleak House, among others, help to suggest, the ghost or spectre thus discloses a unique figurative relevance as a metaphor of a real biological absence. As imaginary anti-bodies, figures of the uncanny signify at once a dreadful dis-ease of disease and a critical form of mental defense, as psychical substitutes (and "hallucinatory wishes") for the protective serum antibodies which people of the time lacked. And as far as the uncanny effects of changing patterns of contagious disease go, perhaps the nineteenth century proves a paradigm relevant to our own contemporary dis-ease with respect to the as-yet-incurable, and ever-escalating, threat of AIDS.

In one respect, the "poisonous" spirits of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel in Henry James's The Turn of the Screw can be considered, in the contexts outlined above, as spectral anti-bodies of disease. If, on the one hand, however, they appear manifestations bound up with the fact of

a physiological lack, then, on the other, as Shoshana Felman has recently shown in her ground-breaking study, "Turning the Screw of Interpretation,"[14] they are also ghosts that in fact signal crucial absences in the textual body, as figures of missing signifiers, or "gaps" of the unwritten word (WM 193ff). But whereas the overriding concern of Felman's discussion of James's text concerns itself with the question of the "madness of interpretation," I return to The Turn of the Screw in Chapter Seven to assess the significance of the ghosts from a representational point of view. For as figures of "the censored chapter" that is the unconscious (Lacan, Écrits 50), James's spectral visitants ultimately reopen the question with which I begin in Chapter Two: namely, the problem of representing the unrepresentable. Indeed, not only do the figures of Miss Jessel and Peter Quint function according to a logic of silent contradiction that recalls the figure of the "language of madness" in Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," but, as emblems of the unconscious, they also pose, for the governess and children who attempt to name them, obstacles to subjective articulation similar to those confronted by Gilman. Nonetheless, through their paradoxically simultaneous function as figures of both speech and silence, James's uncanny pair effectively represent the rhetoricity of the unconscious, and, ultimately, invite a refiguration of Gilman's "language of madness" in rhetorical terms as well.

It will be apparent from the variety of texts I have chosen to include here that the scope of the "madness" encompassed by this study is extensive. As represented by my selection of nineteenth-century fiction, the term applies loosely to a whole spectrum of morbid conditions, ranging from the markedly severe disturbances of Charlotte

Perkins Gilman's and Anthony Trollope's protagonists, to the sort of minor, functional nervous dis-ease or anxiety, which, as I argue in Chapter Six, is manifest in the period's obsession with figures of the uncanny. This deliberately broad interpretation follows from my philosophical understanding of madness as a fundamentally indefinite entity, an "object" of study that eludes the imposition of "objective" boundaries on any level. In this respect, social and psychiatric historians, as well as feminist critics, have emphasized the custodial nature and function of categories of mental "illness," as malleable social constructs, shaped, in part, by successive prevailing norms of acceptable behavior and relevant emotion.[15] Psychoanalysts have likewise grappled with the inherent relativity of the concept from a theoretical point of view. While extremes may be easily differential, just how far, precisely, can a neurotic repression "break" from reality before it may be said to signal a more profound rupture or psychotic foreclosure?[16] Or, for that matter, moving in an opposite direction toward an outmoded ideal of "normalcy," what constitutes the outer limit of neurosis at that end of the "spectrum"? How far does that condition in fact overlap with what Freud called "the psychopathology of everyday life"? And finally, given--as writers from Freud to Norman O. Brown (1959) have argued--the ubiquity of repression as an intrinsic feature of psychical life, what does it mean to speak of a "universal neurosis" encompassing all of humankind?

In the nineteenth century, a number of factors, including the trend toward "moral" psychiatric reform; the widespread institutionalization of madness; the introduction of new diagnostic categories such as "moral" insanity and "monomania"; and the increasing use of insanity,

for the first time in history, as a legal defense,[17] all combined to thrust the problem of madness, and particularly, the problem of defining madness, into the forefront of the public agenda as perhaps never before. Although various discourses about madness began to proliferate, whether in popular fiction such as Charles Reade's Hard Cash, mainstream periodicals such as Dickens's Household Words,[18] or newly specialized medical journals,[19] one contemporary commentary by an anonymous editorial writer of The Times, from July 22, 1854, is particularly incisive on the very issue I have been raising with respect to defining the indefinite.

> Nothing can be more slightly defined than the line of demarcation between sanity and insanity. Physicians and lawyers have vexed themselves with attempts at definition in a case where definition is impossible. There has never yet been given to the world anything in the shape of a formula upon this subject which may not be torn to shreds in five minutes by any ordinary logician. Make the definition too narrow, it becomes meaningless, make it too wide, the whole human race are involved in the drag-net. In strictness, we are all mad as often as we give way to passion, to prejudice, to vice, to vanity, but if all the passionate, prejudiced, vicious and vain people in the world are to be locked up as lunatics, who is to keep the key to the asylum? (8)

As this passage intimates, the business of defining madness entails a sort of classical double-bind: while a highly circumscribed definition of the term would be "meaningless"--in effect, "mad"--an inclusive denomination is bound to ensnare us all in the trap or "drag-net" of madness, placing even the author of such a definition within the realm of the folly or unreason he would define. Moreover, as the anonymous editorialist also suggests, the inevitability of erring in either case arises from the virtual impossibility of drawing any definite or absolute "line of demarcation between sanity and insanity." While nineteenth-century psychophysiologists might talk about the broad grey

frontiers of "the borderlands of insanity" (Wynter 1875), or what late-century French alienists liked to call "the intermediary zone of the demi-fous" (Goldstein, Console 333), writers such as The Times editorialist clearly point toward the abstract and essentially borderless "state" of madness as a realm of wholly indefinite conceptual latitude and longitude.

In fiction of the period, Edgar Allen Poe's farcical tale "The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether" (1845) comically underscores the indeterminacy of the concept of madness, and in effect answers the question of The Times--"who shall keep the key to the asylum?"--through its ironic inversion of the falsely dichotomous categories of "sane" and "insane." In Poe's story, the "soothing system" of the exceedingly obtuse, but ostensibly sane, moral managers of a French "Maison de Santé" is effectually undone by a shrewd group of insurgent insane, who prove by far the wiser fools in comparison.[20] With relative ease, "the keepers and the kept" are "made to exchange places" in Poe's narrative (1019). Thus, while the rebellious inmates wine and dine a naively unsuspecting visitor to the asylum, the doctors and professors of madness--duly tarred and feathered as dupes--are "shut up in cells" elsewhere in the madhouse (1019). However facetious in tone, Poe's carnivalesque reversal of reason and unreason ultimately works to erase the notion of any "line of demarcation between sanity and insanity," reinforcing with a sharp parodic wit the reader's awareness of the arbitrary element structuring such tactical oppositions.

In different keys, both Poe's tale and the passage from The Times thus strike the same unsettling chord with regard to the fine "line" of definition. But the main point, I would stress, is not just that

madness is "impossible" to delimit with absolute certitude. What is of greater note as an underlying and connected concern of both narratives is that in the absence of firm parameters or fixed boundaries, it is likewise "impossible" to orient oneself definitively in relation to madness. How does one situate oneself "outside" of something that defies us, as madness does, to "draw the line"? As a relative trajectory of subtle gradations and differences of degree only, madness has neither a clear point of entry nor an "outside." It necessarily problematizes the relationship of a whole set of signifying binaries, including outside/inside, sane/insane, self/other. In their visions of "the keepers and the kept" not only reversing "places," but, in effect, cohabiting a common place--one vast keeperless asylum, as it were, for all of "Mad Humanity"[21]--some nineteenth-century writers conveyed this point very effectively indeed.

The foregoing discussion also anticipates the second sense in which the conception of madness adumbrated here is a comprehensive one. For just as my use of the term is inclusive in that it applies to a broad range of morbid conditions in literature, so too is it expansive in the sense that, as I suggested earlier, my approach to fictional representations of madness presupposes the involvement and inclusion of the diagnostician "in" that literary madness. In this respect, my work has been significantly influenced by the examples of Sander Gilman and Shoshana Felman, each of whom has undertaken a searching reexamination of the meaning--and the tacit motives--of our seemingly reflexive compunction to contain pathology by "locating" it conceptually "in" literature or art. Sander Gilman prefaces his absorbing analysis of

images of disease in Disease and Representation (1988) with the observation that

> the fear we have of our own collapse does not remain internalized. Rather, we project this fear onto the world in order to localize it, and indeed, to domesticate it. For once we locate it, the fear of our own dissolution is removed. Then it is not we who totter on the brink of collapse, but rather the Other . . . . How we see the diseased, the mad, the polluting is a reflex of our own sense of control and the limits inherent in that sense of control. (1, 4)

Regardless of the specific variety, illness, Gilman argues, always signals "a real loss of control," and our subjective anxieties about it are assuaged by the "solid, fixed" aesthetic forms that reify pathology through "images that remain constantly external to our sense of self" (2).

Similarly, in Writing and Madness (1985), Shoshana Felman also contends that when we speak of madness "in" literature--no less, perhaps, than when we speak of it in terms of spatial metaphors as a realm hedged about by nebulous "borderlands"--we are delimiting madness to a fictitious "place" in more than the obvious sense. Felman, whose radically deconstructive approach to the question of madness has called, in the past, for a retheorization of the very relationship traditionally perceived between literature and psychoanalysis, persuasively demonstrates that what is at stake in that modest grammatical preposition "in" is indeed the rather critical conceptual supposition that the critic who thus pinpoints the whereabouts of madness speaks from a position external to it. Like Gilman, she emphasizes that by "shutting madness up in literature," we indulge an illusion of exteriority designed to perpetuate the myth of our own objective distance or separateness from the literary madness we analyze (WM 236).

But to a more thorough extent than Gilman, Felman also examines why it is theoretically untenable to think about literature--and especially, literary representations of madness--in terms of "solid, fixed" forms. According to her, the relationship of the literary critic to the work of literature is an essentially transferential and rhetorical one, meaning that it presumes an implicit desire on the part of the critic to appropriate and "demystify" a "secret" knowledge perceived to inhere "in" the textual "Other." Within the context of Lacanian psychoanalysis she thus develops a theory of reading in which the reader figures

> as a participant in a living transferential drama, as an unconscious textual actor caught without knowing it in the lines of force of the text's 'pure rhetoric', of the addressing power of its signs . . . . Reading, in this way, is . . . rethought, reformulated as the blind repetition, the performative enactment of the rhetoric of the text (and not of its meaning). (WM 31)

Such a theory of reading, subverting as it does any notion of the reader's objective remove from the text, holds specific ramifications for the analysis of madness, which I will develop somewhat more fully in my assessment of Felman's work on The Turn of the Screw in Chapter Seven. In essence, though, Felman shows how the reader's unselfconscious participation in a text's "rhetoric of madness," or its overt, thematic statements about madness, effects an unwitting reduplication of those same "lexical motifs" in the reader's own critical discourse, which "not only elucidates the text [of madness], but also reproduces it dramatically" (WM 145, 148). Moreover, to the extent that the psychoanalytic reader of literature may seek a definitive answer to the question of madness, "the quest for mastery" of the text's meaning invariably involves an additional element of nonsense, a form of unconscious repression that, ironically, manifests

itself as a "form of blindness" (WM 211). As she asserts: "Whenever it 'explains' literature, [and] particularly when it locates madness in literature, psychoanalysis is in danger of revealing nothing more than its own madness: the madness of interpretation" (WM 30). For Felman, then, the subject of madness in literature is in no way confined to the literary text, "as though it were possible, in language, to separate oneself from language": "[t]he fact [is] that literature has no outside, [and] that there is no safe spot assuredly outside of madness, from which one might demystify and judge it, locate it in the Other without oneself participating in it" (WM 241, 240).

Felman's model of reading as a "living transferential drama" informs my own conception of semiotic dimensions of madness in relation to nineteenth-century fiction. However, while I subscribe to her idea of madness as a rhetorical effect that is "uncanny, unheimlich, to the precise extent that it cannot be situated" (WM 241), I would also emphasize that my work is itself the sign of a more ambivalent theoretical (dis)position. For my study of the "diagnostics of madness," in Lady Audley's words, fundamentally presupposes, of course, the designation of madness. It is in this sense, perhaps, the trace of a productive tension between a simultaneous desire, on my part, to define myself against the pathology I seek to locate, and to explore the re-presentations of those symptoms--as patients are said to "present" symptoms--in my own representations of madness as well as in those of nineteenth-century authors.

Indeed, this latter point might be usefully amplified in the context of Herman Melville's Moby-Dick. In Chapter 99 of that novel, "The Doubloon," the monomaniacal Captain Ahab contemplates an enigmatic,

rare coin nailed to the mast of the Pequod. "[R]evered . . . as the white whale's talisman," this incomprehensible hieroglyphical symbol appears as a token of the unconscious, especially in that, like the "unplumbable . . . navel" at the heart of the dream (Freud, SE 4:111), it is prefigured by Pip, the ship's fool, as the very "navel" of the Pequod: "Here's the ship's navel, this doubloon here, and they are all on fire to unscrew it. But, unscrew your navel, and what's the consequence?"[22] As Pip suggests, to attempt to unravel or fathom the unknown contents of the unconscious may involve an element of self-undoing. For what the Captain and crew who attempt to read the doubloon discover is not, in the end, any secret meaning, but rather, its uncanny double-loon effect, "which, like a magician's glass, to each and every man in turn but mirrors back his own mysterious self" (428). As Ahab's interpretations of the token's cryptic encipherments thus but "mirror back" the substance of a "mysterious" subjective monomania, so it is with my own pursuit of the signs and symptoms of madness in texts such as Melville's. Like that anxious mariner as well, though, the knowledge that I will in some sense effect a doubling of lunacy, a minting of new unmeaning, as I proceed, does not negate--cannot negate--my concurrent desire to discover for myself "some certain significance" in "strange figures and inscriptions"--"else all things are little worth, and the round world itself but an empty cipher" (427).

The intertwined acts of reading and writing about pathology thus trigger, like a mutant tag of DNA, a process of replication that in this case unfolds as an infinite semiosis of the contra-dictions of madness. By risking such a reduplication of madness, my method here is intended, in part, to avoid another sort of redundancy: a reduplication of the

largely sociohistorical approach that has prevailed in much of the extant criticism on madness and nineteenth-century literature.[23] As I see it, this is at once the value and the limitation of the present study. For although my approach to the question of madness signals, in certain respects, a quite inclusive "drag-net," this is not a comprehensive account of the manifold experiences of mental illness as they are explored by authors such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Charlotte Brontë, Herman Melville, or Henry James. In my selective focus upon the rhetorical values and functions of semiotic manifestations of madness, my concern here is not, as a rule, with the underlying causal factors of psychopathology, or with the sociopolitical contexts in which illness, as a cultural event, occurs. Though I have tried to be sensitive to the social matrices and material realities conditioning the signs of disease I undertake to study, my discussion necessarily hazards a minimization of the real ideological relevance of forms of madness. This is a liability I have attempted to redress by referring the reader, where possible, to alternative and pertinent studies from the large and variegated body of criticism that the subject of madness has elicited over the years. It is as a complementary token to that vigorous body of writing that the present study is contributed.

PART I:

WORDS

CHAPTER TWO

'UNHEARD OF CONTRADICTIONS': THE LANGUAGE OF MADNESS IN C. P. GILMAN'S "THE YELLOW WALLPAPER"

> To say 'I am mad' is already, logically, a contradiction in terms: either the speaker is 'mad' and what he says (the theme) is non-sense, or else he is saying something meaningful, and is therefore sane (at least at the moment he says it). The act of enunciation contradicts and problematizes the statement it issues.
>
> - Shoshana Felman, Writing and Madness, 1985

> We see then that, metaphor occurs at the precise point at which sense emerges from non-sense.
>
> - Lacan, Écrits, 1977

1. Some of the Writing on the Wall(paper)

"The Yellow Wallpaper" (1891) is a haunting first-person narrative of a nameless young woman's lonely spiral through ever-deepening degrees of post-partum depression to an ultimately nightmarish condition of acute psychosis. It was once candidly characterized by its author, the eminent American suffragette, economist, and utopian socialist, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, as a "description of a case of nervous breakdown beginning something as mine did and treated as Dr. S. Weir Mitchell treated me with what I considered the inevitable result, progressive insanity" (Living 119). Whether or not critics have chosen to refer explicitly to details of Gilman's own mental collapse, considerations of the "progressive insanity" in "The Yellow Wallpaper" have thus far focused largely upon aspects of the richly documented medico-cultural circumstances surrounding the story.[1] In particular, literary historians such as Elaine Showalter (1985), Ellen L. Bassuk

(1986), and Suzanne Poirier (1983) have examined Gilman's life and work in relation to the "nervous" woman's late-nineteenth-century subjection to (and rejection of) the popular Weir Mitchell "Rest Cure" for neurasthenic and hysterical disorders. Many others, including Loralee MacPike (1975), Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (1979), Jean E. Kennard (1981; rpt. 1989), and Linda Wagner-Martin (1989) have argued the insanity of Gilman's mad mater as a gesture of more general protest against the chafing and debasing patriarchal structure of Victorian female domesticity.

What is perhaps especially striking, though, about the increasingly voluminous criticism generated by Gilman's tale in the almost three decades since its "rediscovery" by the feminist scholar Elaine Hedges is the near universal reluctance of critics to address fully the very basic question posed by the story's movement into madness--its case of "progressive insanity"--on the one hand, and its journal form on the other: namely, what of the logical contradictions inherent in Gilman's flawlessly coherent and chronological first-person-present account of the degenerating mind? When one contrasts Gilman's journalistic fiction to her non-fictional life narratives, her own journal diary, for example, it becomes quickly apparent that her self-styled "simple tale" (Hill 186) involves "a very complex [narrative] stance indeed," as Elaine Hedges delicately phrases it (49). For while Gilman's own journal, faithfully kept since age fifteen, inevitably contained its "only blanks" during "the years of sickness and pain" (Hill 148) she would later refer to as "The Breakdown" (Living 90), the anonymous narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper" manages to maintain a simple but tightly controlled prose which shifts, almost imperceptibly, into the

past tense only at the very nadir of her psychosis, as she leaves herself crawling "[r]ound and round and round--round and round and round--" (29) the scraps and curlicues of shredded wallpaper in her lunatic's loft.

Critical responses to the formal contradiction lodged at the story's core have been varied. In general, silence reigns, but where the issue is raised, it is often dismissed without comment. In her afterword to the Feminist Press edition of the text, for instance, Hedges simply observes the puzzling fact that the narrator "is ultimately mad and yet, throughout her descent into madness, [she is] in many ways more sensible than the people who surround and cripple her" (49), before she proceeds with her main claim that, be that as it may, Gilman's story is "a small literary masterpiece . . . narrated with superb psychological and dramatic precision" (37). A similar only more absolute repression of this textual conundrum occurs in Beate Schöpp-Schilling's argument for the story's unfailing "psychological realism" (284), while even Mary Jacobus's typically lucid psychoanalytic exposition of the Gothic irrationalism or hysterical "unconsciousness of the text" (233) adroitly circumnavigates the question of narrative voice.[2] Indeed, it is often while propounding the very symbolic and theoretic readings that Gilman's story so obviously invites that critics tend to forget about the fundamental facts of narrative transmission, which can lead to such awkward claims as Annette Kolodny's problematic conclusion that Gilman's narrator "progressively gives up the attempt to record her reality and instead begins to read it" (53).

A few of the writings on "The Yellow Wallpaper," on the other hand, do refer directly to the logical problematics inherent in Gilman's use

of a first-person narrator. Invariably, however, they do not view the problem in context of the story's slow, steady swirl into insanity. Conrad Shumaker, for example, clearly perceives that "the journal embodies in its very form . . . absurd contradictions," but he attributes this to conflicts intrinsic to the protagonist's role as a nineteenth-century wife (69). Similarly, in her semiotic treatment of "female discourse" and "male diagnosis" in "The Yellow Wallpaper," Paula A. Treischler also observes that "the form of the story we are reading" continues to embody the same sort of "unheard of contradictions" that the narrator herself notes in the hideous wallpaper (73). Like Shumaker, however, she ultimately ascribes the paradox of the story to a feminist dilemma more sociohistoric than theoretic in nature. For Treischler, that is, women's discourse such as the narrator's journal (of which the yellow wallpaper is taken as a metaphor [62]) seeks "to escape the sentence that the structure of patriarchal language imposes" (62), "to move beyond the boundaries of formal syntax" (70). But "there is as yet no escaping the sentence of male-determining discourse" (71). "Contradictions remain," her article concludes, "for they are inherent in women's current 'condition' . . . . To 'escape the sentence' involves both linguistic innovation and change in material conditions" of women's sociopolitical realities (74). A similar, though brief, discussion of the "unheard of contradictions" in the wallpaper and the text are offered by Janice Haney-Peritz, who, like Treischler, views the story's treatment of discursive structures in terms of a gender-based dialectic between woman's writing and prescriptive male discourse (116-18).

This chapter proposes to examine in greater detail the "unheard of contradictions" (13) in Gilman's story of "progressive insanity." Specifically, I wish to challenge the notion advanced by critics such as Shumaker and Treischler that the paradox inherent in the story's form is to be somehow ultimately or solely linked to a determined historical structure or condition, whether to an ideologically contradictory social role or a finite linguistic or political phase of woman's "condition."[3] Instead, by holding the principle of madness as the variable which problematizes the narrative form, I will attempt to show that the apparent sacrifice of psychological realism entailed by Gilman's narrative mode--far from constituting any sort of "defect"--actually involves a highly creative displacement of the actual signifying processes of madness, processes Michel Foucault refers to as a form of "delirious discourse" (99). By reading the yellow wallpaper, that is, as a metaphor not of women's discourse but of the delirious language of madness in general, it becomes apparent how Gilman, deflecting in graphic relief her mad narrator's unintelligible alpha-bits of discourse onto the walls of her "atrocious nursery" (13), is at once able to evoke the language of "progressive insanity" and at the same time avail herself of the powerful immediacy of a lucid, first-person, journalistic mode.

And if, on one level, this strategy of displaced delirious discourse must be regarded as an eminently pragmatic and didactic ploy--a deliberate waiver of the dictates of "psychological realism" by which Gilman quite simply ensures the continued meaningfulness of her story--then on another less functional plane, it is also as an aesthetic stroke that can be variously validated on the philosophic and metapsychological

grounds suggested by theorists such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Paul Ricoeur. Ultimately, the knowledge which discloses itself in the sprawling and tortured contortions of Gilman's patterned walls seems at once a strangely superficial and yet profound insight into the signifying processes of the unconscious. For through her indirect metaphorical method, Gilman effectively teaches us, without ever having to tell us, that the "language" of madness presupposes a semiotic mode that is in part visual: a mode, indeed, of unheard contra-diction.

2. Writing the 'Dead Paper': Method in Madness vs. Delirious Discourse

Unsympathetically diagnosed by her physician-husband as suffering from a "temporary nervous depression--a slight hysterical tendency" (10), the narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper" finds herself sequestered in an attic "nursery" (which the text, though, suggests has roomed a mad woman or two before), her already "sensitive" "nervous condition" (11) exacerbated by her husband's strict injunction that she not write or "'work' until [she is] well again" (10). Denied the opportunity to relieve freely through writing the painful "press of ideas" which throb within (16), the narrator can resort only clandestinely to the writing of her "dead paper," as she calls her journal (10). Under the strain, she soon begins to confess symptoms of worsening mental distress: "It is getting to be a great effort for me to think straight," as she says. "Just this nervous weakness I suppose" (21).

Such simple testimonials of incipient mental pathology, belied throughout by the cogent lucidity and linear logic of their very utterance, begin to point up the central paradox of the narrator's story; a paradox which becomes only more pronounced the further she

seems to slip into a delusory world of psychosis. Even at the extreme depths of her hallucinatory delirium, for example, her prose flows according to the manifest rules of syntax, grammar, punctuation, and logic which help determine meaning. Her frightful vision of a woman creeping outside "by daylight" is conveyed in her typically clipped and precise style, and as such is a very controlled observation:

> I often wonder if I could see her out of all the windows at once.
> But, turn as fast as I can, I can only see out of one at one time.
> And though I always see her, she may be able to creep faster than I can turn! (31)

In contrast to the "lame uncertain curves" and "outrageous angles" of the wallpaper (13), then, which are "not arranged on any laws of radiation, or alternation, or repetition, or symmetry, or anything else" the narrator has "ever heard of," the prose of the "dead paper" continues to the end to underscore, silently but emphatically, the truth of its author's understated claim that she "know[s] a little of the principle of design" (20).

Indeed, it is particularly when Gilman's protagonist has degenerated to the extent that she has begun to hallucinate female figures tangled and strangled or creeping behind the wallpaper's "sprawling flamboyant patterns" (13), that Paula Treischler is led to observe:

> Until now we as readers have acquiesced in the fiction that the protagonist is keeping a journal, a fiction initially supported by journal-like textual references. This now becomes difficult to sustain: how can the narrator keep a journal when, as she tells us, she is sleeping, creeping, or watching the wallpaper the whole time? In her growing paranoia, would she confide in a journal she could not lock up? How did the journal get into our hands? Because we are nevertheless reading this 'journal', we are forced to

> experience a contradiction: the narrative is unfolding in an impossible form. This embeds our experience of the story in self-conscious attention to its construction. (72-73)

Compelled, as Treischler suggests, to consider aspects of the narrative's construction, the reader soon sees that, despite the first-person-present mode of its telling, the "dead paper" of this madwoman does not, in any direct or simple sense, amount to "a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing" (Macbeth 4.5).

To observe that the language of the narrator's journal thus illustrates the Shakespearean paradox of "reason in madness," though, is not to suggest a wholesale banishment of the discourse of madness from the pages of Gilman's story, which does attempt an indirect or visual representation of such language through the pictographic metaphor of the wallpaper's delirious designs. To begin with the concept of language as "design," in general, one may refer to Heidegger, who uses the term to denote the very essence or "proper character of the being of language":

> The 'sign' in design (Latin signum) is related to secare, to cut--as in saw, sector, segment. To design is to cut a trace. Most of us know the word "sign" only in its debased meaning--lines on a surface. But we make a design also when we cut a furrow into the soil to open it to seed and growth. The design is the whole of the traits of that drawing which structures and prevails throughout the open, unlocked freedom of language. The design is the drawing of the being of language. (121)

To design by cutting a "furrow," however, may also imply a pathological deviation from the structured pattern of language. Indeed, the word "delirium," as Robert James reminds us, "is derived from lira, a furrow; so that deliro actually means to move out of the furrow, away from the proper path of reason."[4] And it is this delirious design or language that, according to Foucault, constitutes "the ultimate truth of madness insofar as it is madness's organizing form, the determining principle of

all its manifestations" (97). For "the simplest and most general definition we can give of classical madness," Foucault contends, "is indeed delirium" (99): "It is in . . . delirium, which is of both body and soul, of both language and image, of both grammar and physiology, that all the cycles of madness conclude and begin" (100-01).

That Gilman's horrific wallpaper, with its fungoid "florid arabesques" (25), closely resembles the organic-pictographic designs of the delirious discourse described by Foucault (as well as the "rebus" representations or "picture puzzles" of the dream, outlined by Freud in The Interpretation of Dreams) is readily apparent. Depicted at one point as a series of "bloated curves and flourishes--a kind of 'debased Romanesque' with delirium tremens" (20), the crazily contradictory design on the wall is presented as a type of aesthetic-geometric script that is deliriously drunken and swollen, bulging and reeling out of the bounds of all reason. Infected with a distinctly composite semio-somatic pathology that embraces the realms of both sign and symptom, the wallpaper appears as an actively malignant and malevolent entity, a monstrous, lolling, multi-eyed thing of great "optic horror" (20) that "looks . . . as if it knew what a vicious influence it had!" (16). Like a strange hieroglyphic scrawl, the wallpaper is a type of imagistic language to be read or "mastered," but it is a physically violent trickster or "master" in itself, too:

> You think you have mastered it, but just as you get well underway in following, it turns a back-somersault and there you are. It slaps you in the face, knocks you down, and tramples upon you. It is like a bad dream. (25)

Of both body and soul, language and image, grammar and physiology, Gilman's wild wallpaper clearly reflects the "quasi-oneiric character of

madness" (Foucault 101) in its overpowering cruelty and nightmarish "interminable grotesques" (20). "Like a bad dream," it represents the principle of delirium itself, which, as Foucault writes, "is a system of false propositions in the general syntax of the dream" (106).

In its "headlong plunges of equal distraction" (20) and gnarled, confused anger, the yellow wallpaper thus embodies "all those stammered, imperfect words without fixed syntax" (Foucault x), all that "lack of sequence, [and] defiance of law, that is a constant irritant to a normal mind" (25) and that is conspicuously absent in the journal narrator's relentlessly straight-thinking prose. Through such subtle metaphoric means, Gilman suggests to her reader that the truly deviant deliro or action in her story is not to be traced in the lines committed by the narrator to her "dead paper," but rather, in the "lame uncertain curves" which animate the walls of the woman's wretched private asylum. There, the lines of genuinely delirious designs are far more apt to plough astray the paths of reason, to "commit suicide--plunge off at outrageous angles, destroy themselves in unheard of contradictions" (13).

3. Writing 'The Yellow Wallpaper': 'Method in Mind,' or, The Second Sense of 'Conversion'

The language of madness within the text may thus be understood as a vocabulary silently displaced in the delirious patterns plastered all over the attic walls. But the question now remains as to what to make of this creative maneuver on Gilman's part. Given the extremely prosaic poetics she espoused, an aesthetic arabesque purely for the joy of execution seems especially unlikely. Indeed, Gilman's remarkably brusque attitude toward the literary merit of her fiction in general,

and particularly her claim that "the real purpose" of "The Yellow Wallpaper" was to "reach" the eminent "Rest Cure" neurologist, S. Weir Mitchell, "and convince him of the error of his ways" (Living 121), has received a good deal of attention. In her autobiography, Gilman recalls, in her typically trenchant way, assuring W. D. Howells that "The Yellow Wallpaper" "was no more 'literature' than my other stuff, being definitely written 'with a purpose'. In my judgment it is a pretty poor thing to write, to talk without a purpose" (121). And the "purpose" of "The Yellow Wallpaper," said she, again and again, was simply didactic: "I wrote it to preach. If it is literature, that just happened" (qtd. in Allen 145). Speaking another time of her "other stuff," Gilman enlarged upon this fundamentally prosaic conception of her art: "I have never made any pretense of being literary. As far as I had any method in mind, it was to express the idea with clearness and vivacity, so that it might be apprehended with ease and pleasure" (Living 284-85).

The pragmatic purpose of Gilman's metaphoric displacement of the language of madness is clear enough: Gilman's "method in mind" presupposes her narrator's "method in madness" insofar that if she wished both to carry out her didactic agenda on the dangers of the Rest Cure and to allow her narrator the confessional immediacy of a first-person voice, she had somehow necessarily to ensure the continued clarity, at least the technical readability, of her narrator's journal prose. Gilman's visual metaphor of the incoherent and broken babble of delirium thus represents a practical alternative to the exigencies posed by the course of "psychological realism," which would, conversely, entail an attempt to replicate that disjointed and fragmentary form of

utterance, with all its attendant semantic distortions and conceptual confusions. Metonymically displacing the "language" of madness in a metaphor, Gilman subtly handles the thorny problem of the "non-representational aesthetic" which madness announces (Martin 81), discovering her own unique method "for processing psychotic experience" without compromising common sense.[5] Notably, as the embodiment of a principle of madness which the text could not realize in any but a metaphoric sense if it were also to achieve its polemical purpose, Gilman's wallpaper not only serves its author well by enabling readers to "apprehend" the story's anti-Mitchell condemnation of the Rest Cure and its vindication of the legitimacy of female 'nervous' disorders; it also represents a narrative strategy fully comprehensible in one of her "unusually strong spacial consciousness" as well (Allen 57).

Importantly, though, to grant Gilman's highly didactic attitude toward her art this much weight is not necessarily to agree with her reductive estimate of "The Yellow Wallpaper"; one certainly does well to heed the words of critics quick to point out that, whatever its original polemical impulse, Gilman's "purposeful fiction" "transcends its author's expressed intent" (Shumaker 66). At this point, I would want to add as well that thus far I have perhaps also established a dichotomy too neat in its implicit opposition of the mad narrator's paradoxical language of reason and the wallpaper's delirious discourse. These caveats are raised in the wake of Mary Jacobus's recent and compelling "hysterical" reading of "The Yellow Wallpaper," a reading skeptical of both rationalist and didactic approaches to Gilman's text. According to Jacobus, to read Gilman's story in terms of her own declared "real purpose" is to "repress its literariness." She therefore argues that

> Gilman's is a story that has forgotten its 'real purpose' (conversion), becoming instead a conversion narrative of a different kind--one whose major hysterical symptom is an unnecessary (or should one say 'hysterical'?) reading of the maze of signs. (230)

Provocative though it most certainly is--especially in its excellent analysis of the "yellow smell" (29) which permeates the story--Jacobus's "hysterical" reading of "The Yellow Wallpaper" as a figure of the unconscious ultimately remains problematic. For by "forgetting" altogether the primary, literal sense of the text's "conversion" work, her own reading errs too far in repressing or overlooking the basic fact of the story's stylistic simplicity. Indeed, Jacobus would have us equate our reading of the narrator's journal with the narrator's pathetic attempts to untangle the meaning of the maddening patterns on the wall: "Just as we read the text, so she [the protagonist] reads the wallpaper," Jacobus contends (231). In fact, however we have seen that this is not entirely so; the almost primer-like prose of the journal narrative we read has neither the incoherence nor the combative, visceral force of the unpleasantly pugilistic wallpaper. At least in a technical sense, an elementary "easy read," the journal is quite the antithesis of the text on the wall, which Jacobus herself later notes is defined precisely by "its resistance to being read" (245).

Perhaps a more tenable position to adopt, then, would be to suggest that the first-person narrative of the story evinces the dual senses of "conversion" as both a symptom of the narrator's hysteria and a sign of Gilman's inveterate didacticism. Thus, the linguistic or grammatical characteristics that appear to signify hysterical hyperbole on the part of the narrator--such as her "adjectival excess" (Jacobus 234) or "exclamation marks, italics, intensifiers, and repetition" (Treischler

66)[6]--can also be read ambivalently as tokens of Gilman's own righteous rhetorical passion, signs of her commitment to the larger polemical and pontifical projects she wished to effect.[7] The exclamation mark, which readers have hitherto noted only in passing (it appears a remarkable eighty-five times in a story of roughly 4,000-4,500 words) signals this dualistic ambiguity of narrative voice especially well. For while exclamation points clearly mark the narrator's excessive emotionality ("Such a dear baby!" [14]; "Dear John!" [20]) and growing hysterical paranoia ("I have found out another funny thing, but I shan't tell it this time!" [31]), they are also strokes surcharged at times with a current of irony ("I am glad my case is not serious!" [14]), indignation ("You see he does not believe I am sick!" [10]), or emphasis ("But I must say what I feel and think--it is such a relief!" [21]) that carries at least as much, maybe more, rhetorical voltage from the implied author herself as from the "anonymous" narrative voice. To a certain extent, then, emphatic punctuation represents a graphic stylistic reminder of the fact that Gilman's conscious motive for writing "The Yellow Wallpaper" was, quite literally, to reinforce a point, a meaningful point. Unlike the "pointless pattern" of the wallpaper (19), this is something Gilman's story manages to achieve.

It is in the sense that the prose characteristics of the first-person narrative, especially its punctuation (which should ostensibly serve to help fix meaning), ultimately points up (or down!) an ambiguous doubleness of voice that the narrator's journal cannot simply be regarded as a purely "linear" or "logical" "monologue of reason" (Foucault x) to set against the delirious scrawl of the wallpaper, as a sort of straightforward binary opposite. Rather, Gilman's didactic

"conversion" narrative is to her narrator's hysterical "conversion" narrative as wallpaper is to wall: a kind of palimpsestic overlay that "sticketh closer than a brother" (17) and is very difficult to peel apart or separate entirely. In the end, then, perhaps Gilman's exclamation points (!) mark questions (?) more than anything else. For like the partially scrolled or peeled strips of wallpaper left dangling beyond the reach of the mad narrator at the end of the story, their stiff-spined points can curdle or curl into "lame uncertain curves" in the reader's mind: nagging hangnails which ask no easy questions about the ontological status of autobiographically informed, first-person fictional narratives.

4. 'On the Question of the Language of Madness'

Beyond the functional, didactic advantages it represents, however, Gilman's metaphoric displacement of the language of madness also indicates a more significant aesthetic achievement. For as an innovative alternative to the route of a psychological realism which would attempt to render or write delirious discourse directly, it represents a narrative strategy which implicitly acknowledges not only the logical problematics inherent in subjective articulations "of madness," but also the fundamentally composite semiotic nature of representations within or from the unconscious realm.

"The expression 'to say madness itself,'" as Jacques Derrida says, commenting on Foucault's attempt to do just that in his Madness and Civilization, "is self-contradictory": "[m]adness is what by essence cannot be said" (43). For ultimately, he asks, "what is a language that would not be one of reason in general?" (308). Derrida expands upon the

enigma of what he argues constitutes a mutually exclusive relationship between language and madness:

> By its essence, the sentence is normal. It carries normality within it, that is, sense, in every sense of the word. It carries normality and sense within it, and does so whatever the state, whatever the health or madness of him who propounds it, or whom it passes through, on whom, in whom it is articulated . . . . [A]ny philosopher or speaking subject . . . who must evoke madness from the interior of thought . . . can only do so in the realm of the possible and in the language of fiction or the fiction of language. Thereby, through his own language he reassures himself against any actual madness. . . . But this is not a weakness or search for security proper to a given historical language . . . [it] is rather inherent in the essence and very project of all language in general; and even in the language of those who are apparently the maddest. (54-55)

For Derrida, as Shoshana Felman explains, "the very status of language is that of a break with madness, of a protective strategy, of a difference by which madness is deferred, put off" (WM 44). Carrying within it a sort of intrinsic "normalcy," language fundamentally opposes the "truth of madness," which is ultimately conceived of by both Foucault and Derrida as "silent transcendence" (Foucault 101): the very lack of "an organized language, a project, an order, a syntax, a work" (Derrida 34).

Adopting a somewhat less extreme position than Derrida on the language-madness nexus, Paul Ricoeur, taking issue with Lacan's famous precept that the unconscious is "structured like a language," has argued in a more persuasive vein: if representations of the unconscious--of madness--cannot find expression in language, it is not because they constitute inherently antithetical states, but rather, because "the symbolism of the unconscious is not stricto sensu a linguistic phenomenon." According to Ricoeur, language is only a partially valid analogy for the realm of signification within or from the unconscious,

since it is, as he points out, preeminently "the order of images," or visual thinking via thing-presentations of words, that is involved in the primary processes associated with oneiric and deranged cognition. Speaking of the "considerations of representability" manifested by the dream-work, Freud, for instance, observes that "[t]he direction taken by the displacement usually results in a colourless and abstract expression in the dream-thought being exchanged for a pictorial and concrete one . . . . A thing that is pictorial is, from the point of view of a dream, a thing that is capable of being represented" (SE 5:339-40). Insofar as unconscious processes are more accurately described as "paralinguistic distortions of ordinary language," madness is a semiotic phenomenon that eludes a fully accurate or "true-to-nature" representation strictly through the linguistic signifier (Ricoeur 453-54, 404).[8]

In this respect, "The Yellow Wallpaper's" imagistic displacement of delirious discourse--its polite "deferral" of the "attempt to say madness itself"--can be understood as a token of the text's marked respect of the semiotic nature of the unconscious, not as intrinsically anti-word, but as a form of iconosemiotic counter- or contra-diction: a pictographic "quasi-language" just like that on Gilman's nursery walls (Ricoeur 405). Gilman's metaphoric maneuver is a measure of her work's appropriately graphic recognition, in other words, that to attempt to write or speak the "language" of madness is to attempt the impossible, because the "language of madness" can itself, to a certain extent, be viewed as a contradiction in terms. In its visually metaphoric projection of the para-language of delirium, her text signals an implicit awareness of madness as a "role no speaking subject can assume" (Felman, WM 252), an implicit awareness that only "the language of

fiction or the fiction of language" can attempt to give voice to "words" of madness. Ultimately, then, Gilman's unique treatment of the delirious language of insanity in her story signifies a narrative strategy deployed on much more profound grounds than perhaps initially apparent.

5. The Knocking at the Door: The Wall as 'Mur de Langage'

At the end of "The Yellow Wallpaper," the "rationalist husband," as Mary Jacobus puts it, "tries to break in on his wife's madness" (240) as she "smooches" around the peripheries of the by now largely stripped walls of her attic:

> [H]ere I can creep smoothly on the floor, and my shoulder just fits in that long smooch around the wall, so I cannot lose my way.
> Why there's John at the door!
> It is no use, young man, you can't open it!
> How he does call and pound!
> Now he's crying for an axe.
> It would be a shame to break down that beautiful door!
> 'John dear!' said I in the gentlest voice, 'the key is down by the front steps, under a plantain leaf!' . . .
> He stopped short by the door.
> 'What is the matter?' he cried. 'For God's sake, what are you doing!'
> I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder.
> 'I've got out at last,' said I, 'in spite of you and Jane. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!'
> Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time! (35-36)

A doubly "creepy" ending with its vision of female insanity climbing male hysteria,[9] the conclusion of Gilman's story also generates double readings on a metatextual level as both an apt figurative gloss on its own formal predicament--a type of metaphoric coda on the "unheard of contradictions" necessarily inherent in the text of any writer who must

rely on language to tell a tale of madness--and as a reflection on the readers of such tales as well. That is, to the extent that words do constitute a "break" with madness, the walls and door which figure so prominently at the end of "The Yellow Wallpaper" can be understood as concrete embodiments of the notion of a "mur de langage" or "Language Barrier"--to appropriate a suggestive phrase from Jacques Lacan.[10] In this respect, just as Gilman's wallpaper appears throughout as a figure of delirious discourse, the essential principle of madness, so at the end of the story do the more solid surfaces beneath it manifest themselves as representations of the insuperable, rational linguistic bar to the "realistic" articulation of that mad discourse, the impossible barrier to its subjective verbalization by the narrator's speaking voice.

The narrator's pathetic plight at the story's conclusion is a figurative parallel to the dilemma faced by Gilman in writing a realistic first-person fictional account of insanity. Both have originally set out with the delusory task of getting around or through knotty entanglements and logical contradictions--Gilman by displacing delirious discourse in a metaphoric attempt to get around the "mur de langage" and convey the truth of madness's "silent transcendence"; her narrator by simply ripping the wallpaper in a literal attempt to get through the wall, over to the scene of her hellish hallucinations. In the final analysis, however, neither one is really able to "get back behind" the wall which confronts her, linguistic or concrete (35). Both can ultimately only run up against insurmountable, impenetrable barriers. For Gilman is, in the end, every bit as constrained and contained by the "design" of her medium, by the linear and logical

strictures and structures that prevail in language, as her protagonist is by the furrowed "design" of her delirium: by that "long, straight, even smooch" (29) which guides her shoulder along the walls of her "atrocious nursery" like a record needle in the groove of some warped lullaby. "Here we are then," as Lacan might say, "at the foot of the wall, at the foot of the Language barrier" (Language of the Self 80). Indeed, the inescapable paradox of Gilman's story does manifest itself, ultimately, like some massive and indestructible barricade. It is a wall that confronts us with the final fact that whether one speaks of the madwoman's shoulder or the author's pen, the action and essence of delirium ("to move out of the furrow . . .") can be traced only by moving in an endlessly circular fashion within a straight and narrow furrow.

"Round and round and round--round and round and round--it makes me dizzy!" one may well cry with the narrator at this point (29). But a few brief, concluding remarks on "John dear," left pounding at the doorway of delirium before being "literally floored by his wife," as Mary Jacobus has it (233), are yet in order. A quintessential incarnation of the positivist nineteenth-century physician-scientist (and in this respect a sort of clone of Charlotte Brontë's Dr. John in Villette, as many readers have noted), Gilman's John figures within the plot, of course, as the oppressive anti-hero, an entirely unsympathetic character. In seeking "to break down that beautiful door" (35) which theoretically separates sanity from madness in the text, John can be seen to function in the end as the representative of any monologue of reason which would presume to comprehend and thus "master" the "otherness" of insanity by crossing the threshold of the language

barrier. Not yet quite so courageous as to attempt "to say madness itself," John is manifestly punished for his endeavor to _see_ madness itself: hit hard between the eyes by a brief, stunning glimpse into what Jacobus quite rightly terms "the unsayable in Gilman's story" (242).

But while Jacobus defines this "unsayable" as "the sexual etiology of hysteria" (242) as it is embodied in the "uncanny" bestiality of the mad narrator (241), I would suggest, by extension, that the "unsayable" beyond the "_mur de langage_" encompasses more than just the realm of the hysterical; it bespeaks the "unheard of" language of madness in its totality. "Beyond this wall, there is nothing for us but outer darkness"; only the enigmatic oblivion of madness and death lies "beyond the Word," as Lacan puts it, rather cabalistically (_Language of the Self_ 10). Gilman conveys as much, only more optically, in the phantasmagoric designs of the yellow wallpaper, where the sinister silence of madness is left to speak for itself.

Or is it, perhaps, in the end, that the silent paralanguage of madness is all the more sinister for the very _incompletion_ of its "break" with language? Notwithstanding the partially pictorial nature of the language of the unconscious, in what way might a sort of "madness" nonetheless manifest itself in and through the language of literature? This is the question to which I now turn within the context of Jane Austen's "Love and Freindship," and, ultimately, to which I will return with Henry James's _The Turn of the Screw_. For it is in James's novella, particularly, that the figures of a pair of "unheard of" ghosts invite a further consideration of Gilman's trope of madness, of the manner in which the very dynamics of rhetoric itself are bound to the

unconscious, and mark, indeed, the movement of a sort of contra-diction, a "madness of rhetoric" (Felman, WM 252) that ultimately exists as a silent "otherness" within the very discourse it also, in some sense, exceeds.

CHAPTER THREE

"RUNNING MAD":

LOCOMOTION AND THE MADNESS OF LANGUAGE IN

JANE AUSTEN'S "LOVE AND FREINDSHIP"

> These juvenile sketches provide an excellent antidote to the conventional view of Jane Austen as a calm, well-mannered novelist, confined to a narrow world of subtle nuance and at times crippling decorum. Here she forgets or has not yet learned to be constrained by her manners, and reveals that she knows more than a girl her age should.
>
> - Margaret Drabble, "Foreword," Jane Austen's Beginnings, 1989

> In the logic of the theme, contradiction is inadmissible. But the rhetoric of the text suspends that logic: it resides in thematic contradiction, functioning according to a different logic, that of the unconscious, which, as we know, knows nothing of contradiction. Rhetoric is nothing other than a mode of contradiction in the text.
>
> - Shoshana Felman, Writing and Madness, 1985

1. In the Beginning: The Art of 'Running Mad'

Just over a century prior to the appearance of "The Yellow Wallpaper" in America, fourteen-year-old Jane Austen wrote what was to become the "best known juvenile piece" (Epstein 402) of her three-"volume" collection of early writings, the raucous and rattling burlesque entitled "Love and Freindship" (1790). Written in epistolary form, Austen's first-person narrative features the irrepressible Laura, a swooning heroine of sensibility whose self-professed propensity for "running mad" poses a comic parallel to the sorts of logical contradictions inherent in Gilman's text. Glaring absurdities result, indeed, from the "burden of self-consciousness" placed upon the narrator by the epistolary mode, as Annette B. Hopkins long ago noted. She

points specifically to how Austen's heroine is at one point "driven to describe her own appearance in the process of going mad" (41). "My voice faltered, my eyes assumed a vacant Stare, my face became as pale as Death, and my Senses were considerably impaired--," the blithely self-observant Laura thus confides, before fortuitously proceeding to recall, verbatim, the pith and substance of a "two Hours" raving mad soliloquy.[1]

Although "The Yellow Wallpaper" and "Love and Freindship" thus embody a similar formal incongruity, the disparate generic impulses shaping them also presuppose vastly different authorial treatments of the question of madness. For Jane Austen's "early works, of course, do not purport to be realistic" (Spacks 127) in the same way as Gilman's fictionalized account of the dangers of the late-nineteenth-century Rest Cure. In the words of one critic, "Love and Freindship" is primarily "a criticism . . . of art, not of life" (Mudrick 14); as such, the literary conventions which it deliberately strains are intended to ring false. Gilman's apparent concern, in "The Yellow Wallpaper," with the possibility of a theoretically accurate representation of the "language" of madness is thus an issue largely foreclosed by Austen's text, which, as a burlesque of the eighteenth-century novel of sensibility, focuses more irreverently, instead, on caricaturing a fictional paradigm of madness, and, indeed, on exposing the illusory artifice of literature itself.

Since its first publication in 1922,[2] critics such as Marvin Mudrick, A. Walton Litz, Brian Southam, Juliet McMaster, Yasmine Gooneratne, and others have mined "Love and Freindship" both for its relevance as a record of apprenticeship within the context of Austen's

oeuvre as a whole, and, especially, for its literary merit as a burlesque. And in recent years, the standard reading of this juvenile text as a precocious "satire on the fable of the fainting lady" (Chesterton ix), or on "tales of passion and improbable romance generally" (Gillie 26), has advanced toward a deeper appreciation of "the text itself": "although 'Love and Freindship' inevitably makes its first impact as a burlesque," comments Juliet McMaster, "it also deserves attention for its own intrinsic value, and for its internal ironies" ("Teaching" 141). Readers such as Patricia Spacks have, in fact, freshly reconceived the burlesque elements of the juvenilia as a fundamental basis of its "intrinsic value." Signalling far more than merely a crude dismissal of literary sentimentalism, Austen's juvenile parodies, she suggests, can be seen to constitute an unexpectedly sophisticated form of metafiction. As "fictions about fiction, [the juvenilia] call attention to their own operations and to the relations of those operations to the workings of fictional precursors" (127).[3]

Parody is, of course, in obvious respects, a highly conscious literary form. And the conventional critical approach to "Love and Freindship" as a work of burlesque has illuminated much of both the text and its context. Such a reading, however, assumes a virtually exclusive preoccupation with (self-)conscious authorial intentions, and is essentially based on the postulate of a non-problematic equivalence of language with cognition or knowledge. Conversely, the underlying premise of my approach to Austen's text in the following pages, informed by theories of rhetoric advanced by writers such as Shoshana Felman and Paul de Man, is that language entails a "performative function that is not simply co-extensive with its cognitive function" (Felman, WM 25).

"Every speech act," as de Man puts it, "produces an excess of cognition, but it can never hope to know or understand," in full, "the process of its own production" (45).

As opposed to readers such as Spacks, then, my interest here is largely with the un(self-)conscious actions and excesses of the language of Austen's ebullient text: with rhetorical operations that do not preclude but do exceed the elements of deliberate caricature everywhere apparent in "Love and Freindship." Such a focus presupposes a careful foregrounding of the ways in which the unconscious inflects itself rhetorically. After Roman Jakobson, Lacan was the first to emphasize the homologous function between the two main mechanisms of the dream-work, condensation and displacement, and, respectively, the two major "active principles" of rhetoric, metaphor and metonymy (Écrits 169, 166-67). In recent years, critics such as Christian Metz and Kaja Silverman have refined Lacan's position somewhat, arguing that the verbal tropes of metaphor and metonymy, while not strictly homologous with the processes of condensation and displacement, occupy an "intermediate status" as "signifying formations" which "facilitate" or mediate between unconscious and preconscious processes (Silverman 88, 110).[4]

Unconscious dimensions of language activity become especially relevant when it comes to grappling with the question of what one critic has recently termed "the madness of Jane Austen" in her juvenilia. For these early works, Ellen Martin observes, typically "offer intense, isolated scenes that cry out for interpretation, and resist it thoroughly" (84). Martin herself attributes the episodic unintelligibility of the juvenilia to a metonymic linguistic style: one

that proceeds as a "language of disconnection" based on "simple juxtaposition" or contiguous association, rather than on logical associations based on "natural similarities" (84, 91). It is the metonymic narrative's "resistance to interpretation," she concludes, that at once "makes it literary, and makes its reader mad" (85).

A re-reading of "Love and Freindship," however, suggests not only the necessity for a more rigorous reconsideration of Austen's "metonymic" style; it also discloses the "madness" of this incredibly frantic tale to entail something more than the issue of linguistic style alone. Indeed, what is perhaps most intriguing about "Love and Freindship" is precisely how its heroines' loudly pronounced concerns with the art of "running mad" are simultaneously acted out in the "running madness" of Austen's breathless narrative. Austen's theme of "running mad," in other words, is uniquely provocative in that it explicitly calls attention to the definitive feature of the text's stylistic madness: in my terms, its incessant loco-motion. While a theme, by definition, implies the fixed coherence of a "finished" thought, the "madness" of a rhetorical style, as Shoshana Felman perceives, consists above all "in the very principle of movement," and more particularly, in the movement of a "non-totalizable, ungovernable linguistic play," an "endless, metamorphic transformation" of meaning (WM 252, 54). Prefiguring madness in motion as a finite notion, Austen's theme of "running mad" can only misconstrue in finished form the performatively active essence of the "madness" of the text's rhetorical or linguistic style; it speaks of that which it cannot do. For it is precisely the labile metamorphosis of meaning, constitutive of

the madness of rhetoric, which forever eludes thematic containment (Felman, WM 89, 252).

If "Love and Freindship" thus presents us with "two versions," as it were, "of the same subject matter," an active madness both thematized and stylistically or rhetorically enacted,[5] then the loco-motions of language effecting this dynamic also bear closer attention. For although Austen's juvenile style is quite appropriately termed "metonymic," both the conceptual devices of metaphor and metonymy are essentially involved in the "ceaseless transformation" of meaning or "madness" of the text's rhetorical play.[6] Indeed, it is especially when one begins to focus closely upon metaphorical operations as a means of effecting a dynamic transportation of meaning that "Love and Freindship's" persistent thematic commotion over another type of locomotion--of the horse-powered kind this time--begins to disclose a new dimension of significance. In short, converted, diverted, shuttled, or scuttled, stage coaches and carriages prove apt metaphoric vehicles for depicting the "madness" of language otherwise enacted through Austen's narrative style. And in so doing, the paradox of the encounter between "Love and Freindship's" theme and style of madness also becomes best apparent: for when it is viewed as a metaphor of the madness of the text's linguistic style, Austen's stage-coaching motif most clearly illustrates the incipient "thematization" that invariably attends the movement of rhetoric (Felman, WM 95). If, that is, Austen's image of an endless shuttle-coach run between Edinburgh and Sterling finally enfigures the madness of the text's own semiotic performance, then in doing so, it "captures" that loco-motion only to find it already transformed.

Jane Austen is, of course, recognized for her mature work as amongst the most pre-eminent of nineteenth-century novelists. But why include a study of her juvenilia here? Ironically enough, an examination of Austen's early metonymic style points toward a "madness" that can, nonetheless, be seen to presage her later realist fiction quite coherently. "A very real psychological interest, almost amounting to a psychological mystery, attaches to any early work of Jane Austen," G. K. Chesterton mused back in 1922 (xiii). And indeed, despite the thematic continuities that critics such as Juliet McMaster have perceived between the early and later works ("Continuity of JA," 1970); despite, too, the "crude" beginnings of Austen's renowned ironic narrative technique in the juvenile parodies (Mudrick 1952), the apparent stylistic hiatus between the minor sketches and major novels does seem enigmatic. "While all of Jane Austen's major novels are famous for their restraint, for their delicacy, for their miniaturist's craftsmanship," this is not so of "the wild and rowdy" juvenilia, with their "extravagant exaggeration, exuberant jokes, nonsense, slapstick, and anarchic humor" (McMaster, "Teaching" 145). Even taking into account the fact that the grammar and punctuation of the later works may have been "tamed" by editorial intervention, conventionalizing processes to which the juvenilia were not subject,[7] there is "at once," with Sense and Sensibility, as Marvin Mudrick writes, "an obvious break with the tone and method of the juvenilia": "the vivacity, the disinterested focus on scene and action, of 'Love and Freindship', are here remarkable by their absence" (60).

And yet, as the linguist Roman Jakobson had discovered by 1956, a direct relationship may be drawn not only between the principle of

metonymy and prose in general, which "is forwarded essentially by contiguity" (82), but also between the metonymic impulse and nineteenth-century realist fiction in particular. While "the primacy of the metaphoric process in the literary schools of romanticism and symbolism has been repeatedly acknowledged," Jakobson observes,

> it is still insufficiently realized that it is the predominance of metonymy which underlies and actually predetermines the so-called "realistic" trend [in literature], which belongs to an intermediary stage between the decline of romanticism and the rise of symbolism, and is opposed to both. Following the path of contiguous relationships, the realistic author metonymically digresses from the plot to the atmosphere and from the characters to the setting in space and time. (77-78)

While Austen's mature novels "digress" through a multiplicity of narrative details of space and time much less abruptly than do the juvenilia, it is essentially the same metonymic mechanism that generates the "madness" of those early efforts which continues to persist as an elemental tendency of the later works. One might, speculatively, I suppose, associate the perceptible deceleration of metonymic loco-motion in the major novels with the force of repression, a post-pubescent inhibition of the energy of that desire which is unconsciously pursued along a chain of infinite symbolic displacements.[8] But it is not my intention here to elaborate at length on the intricacies of Austen's comprehensive stylistic development. Rather, I would like now to turn to a closer examination of that juvenile loco-motion itself, of those lines from the time our so-called "Sane Jane"[9] had not, as yet, claimed that fame.

2. Madness as Loco-Motion: Theme and Style

"It would be almost impossible to summarize the action of 'Love and Freindship,'" Walton Litz remarks, "since one of Jane Austen's aims was to satirize the intricate and unnatural plots of contemporary fiction" (Jane Austen 19). The heroine, Laura, "and her lovers and friends," as one critic puts it, "rocket about between London, Wales, and Scotland in a manner that is as difficult for the readers as for the characters themselves to keep track of" (McMaster, "Teaching" 145). For the moment, let it suffice to say that the movement of Austen's greatly accelerated plot, which hilariously reduces the formula of the standard romance novel to the level of reductio ad absurdum, culminates in a climactic mad scene that occurs just after Laura and her bosom confidante, Sophia, chance upon the expiring forms of their husbands at the site of a spectacular carriage accident. Upon recognizing the "two Gentlemen most elegantly attired but weltering in their blood," Laura remarks, "Sophia shreiked & fainted on the Ground--I screamed and instantly ran mad." "For an Hour & a Quarter did we continue in this unfortunate Situation," the heroine very precisely recalls, "Sophia fainting every moment & I running Mad as often" (99). As a result of "her continued faintings in the open Air as the Dew was falling" (101), Sophia contracts a cold, which soon issues in a "galloping Consumption" destined to "carr[y] her off" in a few days (102). It is Sophia's fatal illness in the aftermath of madness which prompts the most famous lines of "Love and Freindship":

> "My beloved Laura (said she to me a few Hours before she died) take warning from my unhappy End & avoid the imprudent conduct which has occasioned it . . . beware of fainting fits . . . Though at the time they may be refreshing & Agreable yet beleive me they will in the end, if too often repeated & at improper seasons, prove destructive to your Constitution.

> . . . My fate will teach you this [. . . .] Beware of swoons dear Laura . . . A frenzy fit is not one quarter so pernicious; it is an exercise to the Body & if not too violent, is I dare say conducive to Health in its consequences--Run mad as often as you chuse; but do not faint--." (102)

Austen's burlesque theme of the relative merits of "frenzy fits" and "fainting fits" thus focuses precisely upon the question of a <u>style</u> of madness. For it is not so much the case that, as Ellen Martin contends, "Laura's ravings" themselves are "set up as the preferable kind of reaction" (84), as it is that Laura's particularly dynamic technique for going mad emerges as the parodic ideal within the text. In the matter of madness, as in that of romance, Austen's story suggests, the guiding criterion for the heroine is quite simply that she take "an Active Part . . . in the Affair" (96). And this, for reasons which appeared perfectly comprehensible to Jane Austen long before the advent of Jane Fonda: for the "frenzy fit," as Sophia intimates, can be good aerobic exercise, potentially "conducive to Health" if not "too violent[ly]" pursued. "How could it be otherwise accounted for that I should have escaped the same indisposition [as Sophia]," Laura herself rationalizes,

> but by supposing that the bodily exertions I had undergone in my repeated fits of frenzy, had so effectually circulated & warmed my Blood as to make me proof against the chilling Damps of Night, whereas, Sophia lying totally inactive on the Ground must have been exposed to all their Severity. (101)

It is the thematic emphasis on activity, the stylistic ideal of locomotion ironically upheld in the heroines' discourses about the art of "running mad," that is clearly enacted at the performative level of Austen's narrative, a narrative likewise most saliently defined by a reckless movement or pace that careens along in overdrive, as it were.

To read "Love and Freindship" is indeed to race along behind an author who also seems to be "running mad"--or running the hectic fever of a sort of "galloping Consumption" that consumes itself in langauge. On the one hand, this aspect of the text may be attributed to Austen's idiosyncratic punctuation and syntax. The marked paucity of commas throughout Laura's epistolary narrative, especially around transitive and non-restrictive phrases, for example, suggests a certain writerly lust for speed, a distinct disdain for those grammatical "brakes" or half stops typically applied to modulate prose rhythms and aid sense. In addition, Austen's "run-on" style is characterized by a proliferation of dashes and ampersands: the former flash between phrases, clauses, and sentence fragments like lightning leaps between so many neural synapses; while the latter appear as hasty chain links, loosely coupling the units of some rather hair-raising trains of thought. Finally, Laura's frequent recourse to parenthetical interjection also heightens the reader's sense of a narrative that seems to "bur[n] its way along, [often] skipping, in the process, its own logical . . . steps."[10] The strange and frantic energy of Austen's narrative style is maintained even after the "Damps of Night" effectively dampen the heroines' hysteria at the deaths of their husbands, as the following excerpt illustrates:

> "And whither shall we go (said I) to shelter us [. . .]"? "To that white Cottage." (replied she pointing to a neat building which rose up amidst the Grove of Elms & which I had not before observed--) I agreed & we instantly walked to it--we knocked at the door--it was opened by an old Woman [. . . .] She was a Widow & had only one Daughter, who was then just Seventeen--One of the best of ages; but alas! she was very plain & her name was Bridget . . . . . Nothing therefore could be expected from her--she could not be supposed to possess either exalted Ideas, Delicate Feelings or refined

> Sensibilities--She was nothing more than a mere good-tempered, civil & obliging Young Woman; as such we could scarcely dislike her--she was only an Object of Contempt--. (100-01)

And in like manner, on Austen rushes, "as fast as she could write and quicker than she could spell," as Virginia Woolf put it, "to tell the incredible adventures of Laura and Sophia" (Common Reader 170).

But though erratic punctuation and syntax play an important role, the giddy locomotion of the text's narrative style must also be directly related to the rhetorical movements of metonymy. The contiguous associations which determine the "wild succession" of words and images in Austen's juvenilia, as Ellen Martin has shown, denote a style of telegraphic discontinuity that proceeds by "episodic vignette rather than continuous narrative, and [by] concatenated diverse images instead of logically related ones" (84). Laura's "raving" mad speech at the scene of the carriage accident, to be sure, reads something like a disjointed film in fast-forward:

> "Give me a Violin--. I'll play to him & soothe him in his melancholy Hours--Beware ye Nymphs of Cupid's Thunderbolts, avoid the piercing Shafts of Jupiter--Look at that Grove of Firs--I see a leg of Mutton--They told me Edward was not Dead; but they deceived me--they took him for a Cucumber--" (100)

With its rapid, serial displacements of violin by nymphs and gods, trees, mutton, Edward, and cucumber, Laura's mad speech illustrates especially well the nature of metonymic motion, the continual verschiebung or supersession of one signifier by the next, connected solely on the basis of successive adjacencies.[11]

But rapid-fire metonymic movement is a stylistic feature of the text by no means confined to a single "mad speech." On the contrary, even when the action of the plot slows for a rare moment or two, "the decentralizing energy" of metonymic displacement refuses to rest, with

the characters, in any static "place" (Felman, WM 54-55): the motion of the continually supplanted signifier is, in one sense, "loco" precisely because it perpetually outruns the certainty of a firm locus, a definitive placement. Thus, when the ever-perambulatory Laura and Sophia stop, at one point, for a brief "meditative" hiatus in the countryside, the narrative continues to "run" contiguously, with the same relentless fluidity of the "running" brook and the "running" road Laura espies before and behind them:

> after having walked about a mile & a half we sate down by the side of a clear limpid stream to refresh our exhausted limbs. The place was suited to meditation--. A Grove of full-grown Elms sheltered us from the East--. A bed of full-grown Nettles from the West--. Before us ran the murmuring brook & behind us ran the turn-pike road. (97)

Abruptly scanning the environs--East, West, foreground, and back--Laura's narrative sets the scene by following a metonymic path of relations, which (again, also partially due to the employment of dashes and ampersand) is accompanied by an increased velocity of pace from the mere mention of "meditation" onward, as though to offset an anathema. Quite literally dashing its way from signifier to signifier, Austen's style once again effects a "rush of . . . images" that seek "to be comprehensive, not comprehensible" (Martin 91): for how is it, readers may well wonder, in this particular event, that even "full-grown Nettles" can be said to afford shelter? The metonymic style of the text, in short, reflects a certain "passion for the signifier . . . without regard for what is signified" (Felman, WM 108). And indeed, as is the case with the heroines' assumed loco-motion in the theme of "running mad," Austen's metonymic technique essentially manifests itself as "the locus of an aspiration: 'madness' is the desire for madness."

Unlike Laura and Sophia who hotly pursue madness as a self-conscious ideal, however, the dual desire for madness apparent in the narrative's style unfolds as a "blind rush toward meaning, a dream of excess and hyperbole, of plenitude and potency" (Felman, WM 92).

But the very "madness" of Austen's "comprehensive" metonymic "rush" of words can also be seen to generate, in this instance, a paradoxical excess of knowledge, a measure of the text's uncomprehended or unconscious knowledge. For the very essence of the desire heralded by metonymy, suggestively described by Lacan as the condition of "being caught between the rails--eternally stretching forth towards the desire for something else" (Écrits 167), is not merely rhetorically enacted by the manifold displacements of Austen's prose, but it is also simultaneously projected as a visual image, in her depiction of Laura and Sophia "caught," so to speak, between the brook that "runs" before them and the road that "runs" behind: parallel "rails" "eternally stretching forth" to meet that "something else" just beyond the horizon. The image scenically crystallizes the narrative's own irresistible metonymic impulse, its seemingly compulsive urge to generate an ever sliding chain of signification that rolls along with the momentum of a wheel within runners or tracks. Austen's image of metonymy in this respect presents a figuration of that which the text does not know it knows. If the effect, therefore, of Austen's unconstrained metonymic desire for an unending ribbon of signification is indeed a sort of "madness," it is a madness that must be seen to oscillate at once "between the excessive fullness and the excessive emptiness of meaning" (Felman, WM 254).

Momentarily arrested between the running tracks of brook and road, Austen's heroines are soon "hastening to the field of Action" once again (99) when Laura's narrative surreptitiously transposes the "murmuring" attribute of the "limpid stream" onto the "turn-pike road," which, she now somewhat deliriously asserts, "ran murmuring behind us" (99). In a similar manner, the "Grove of full-grown Elms" (97) that Laura notes as she reposes by the "running brook" is subsequently displaced by a "Grove of Firs" (100), before reappearing, along with a white cottage, as a "Grove of Elms" the heroine professes never to have "before observed" (101). And not only the geography, but characters' identities, as well, are subject to such disorienting shifts and permutations in "Love and Freindship." To cite only the most prominent instance, Laura informs us in a single breath that the "Noble Youth" with whom she instantaneously falls in love at the outset of her "Adventures" is named "Lindsay--for particular reasons however I shall conceal it under that of Talbot" (80). Thereafter, "Talbot" is promptly displaced by "Edward," just as the cousins Gustavus and Philander, alias Gregory and Philip, ultimately "exhibit under the assumed names of Lewis and Quick" (109).

The often bewildering quick-changes or "metamorphic transformations" of meaning resulting from the continual, temporary displacement and replacement of signifiers in Austen's narrative clearly reflect Felman's concept of the "madness of rhetoric" as an intrinsically dynamic form of "unaccomplishment at work: the active incompletion of a meaning which ceaselessly transforms itself, offers itself but to be misunderstood, misapprehended" (WM 54). As opposed to the "madness" affected in the loco-motions of the heroine's body, that which is effected by the loco-motions of the textual body discloses

itself as an eternally unfinished, protean signified, an effect of "the very slippage of meaning, its way of fleeing us each time we think we have it" (Felman, WM 98). Whether taxing the powers of logic with its incongruous metonymic connections, confounding transformations, or peccadilloes of punctuation, Austen's narrative--a frenzy fit to make us faint--"most severely trie[s]" our sense, not our "sensibility" (101). And thus, if "the most interesting people" in Austen's tale "all seem to be running mad," as Ellen Martin rightly observes, then "we, their interpreters, can read their madness only by choosing to commit our own madness, in interpreting, in agreeing to make up at least half the meanings as we go along" (94).

3. 'Imprudent Connections' & 'Unexpected Relations': Metonymy and Metaphor

Just as the subject of madness in "Love and Freindship" calls for a consideration of the interplay between thematic and stylistic dimensions of the text, so the question of Austen's style itself presupposes a focus on the relationship between the binary signifying strategies of metonymy and metaphor. Though individual verbal and written styles typically gravitate toward either the metonymic or metaphoric pole, according to Roman Jakobson, "a competition between the two devices . . . is manifest in any symbolic process, either intrapersonal or social" (80). In Austen's work, metaphorical relations based on natural similarity or resemblance constitute an integral component of the text's metonymic style. Indeed, one way of looking at Austen's run-on style, with its characteristic "blind rush at meaning," is to see it as a style also based fundamentally upon a madness for metaphor--or more precisely,

on a play with the notion of failed metaphor and analogy. This play of course does not preclude the existence of metaphorical relations that sometimes work: with the random hit-and-miss occurrence of meteoric collisions, sensible comparisons or similarities can and do emerge within the text, and teach us something more about the effectiveness of Austen's mad metonymic style, too.

The contending imperatives of metaphoric and metonymic relations are, for instance, amusingly "staged" for the reader within the discourse of characters, and most notably, perhaps, in the dialogue between Laura and Sophia immediately preceding the mad scene. The exchange begins as Laura pines aloud for the women's absent husbands, imprisoned for debt, but Sophia protests the subject, citing even the simple "remembrance" of her lover unbearable for one of her "tender sensibility" (97). Laura's strategy for "changing the conversation" illustrates the process of conceptual metonymic displacement: she directs her companion's attention to features of the landscape around them--the "noble Grandeur of the Elms" next to them, and overhead, the "beautifull sky," streaked with white clouds (98). Sophia's perceptions of these objects, however, are predetermined by a converse and, to say the least, surprising propensity for metaphor and analogy: the elms "remind" her of her husband on the basis that, "like them," he was "tall" and "majestic"; as for the sky, why, it too "cruelly remind[s]" her of Augustus--in particular, of his "blue sattin Waistcoat striped with white" (98). "What could I do?" Laura asks at this point, flabbergasted at the latent similarities Sophia has succeeded in drawing between objects so diverse as Elms and Augustus, his waistcoat and the sky. For the moment, all speech cedes, the heroine "justly fearing"

that "any other topic" "might in some unforeseen manner again waken all [Sophia's] sensibility by directing her thoughts to her husband" (98).

As an enactment of "the signifying game between metaphor and metonymy" (Lacan, Écrits 166), the foregoing dialogue encapsulates the essence of the interpretative dilemma experienced by readers of Austen's story. That is, to the extent that Austen's metonymic style characteristically invites us "to make connections between unlikely objects" (Martin, 91)--strings of things merely contiguously associated--it places us in the rhetorical position of Sophia vis-à-vis Laura's discursive strategy. Just as Sophia seeks to establish meaningful relations based on resemblances between Augustus and the metonymically associated objects to which Laura points, so in the "mad speech" which follows upon the heels of this dialogue are readers likely to find themselves desperately seeking coherent bases of comparison for a wildly conjoined succession of signifiers that, for example, links fir trees with Edward rather than elms with Augustus (100).

According to Martin, readers' attempts at interpreting Austen's metonymic style are invariably doomed to an absurdity tantamount to that of Sophia's outrageous analogies: an attempt to make sense of Laura's raving, she asserts, can lead only to "either triviality or impropriety" (84, my emphasis). On the contrary, however, I would suggest that one of the reasons why this text so well succeeds in perpetually coaching its readers to participate mentally in its metonymic madness--into hitching and coupling conceptual misalliances in the hope of discovering some sensible connection or relation--is that at sporadic intervals, our efforts are indeed rewarded. Even where we may least expect to find them, logical associations based on principles of recognizable

similarity or resemblance--on metaphorical principles--sometimes appear. Martin, for example, quotes Laura's ironic "misattribution" of Jupiter's thunderbolts to Cupid and Cupid's arrows to Jupiter as evidence of the incomprehensibility of her mad soliloquy: it is a metonymic "mix-up that compromises Jupiter's power with passion, and taints Cupid's passion with mastery"; it just does not appear to make sense (84). Reconsidered, though, one might note that Austen's bizarre transposition at bottom points up a sound basis for the substitution: for is it not true, especially in "Love and Freindship," that love and death strike with a similar lightning-like vengeance and alacrity?

The simultaneous "competition" between metaphoric and metonymic tendencies within the narrative of "Love and Freindship," moreover, also embodies an important thematic corollary which unfolds at the level of the characters' relationships with each other. For Austen's is essentially a comedy of "imprudent connection[s]" (83) and "unexpect[ed] Relations" (103) between characters whose relationships with one another reflect the very nature and effects of the metonymic and metaphoric relationships comprising the narrative's style. From the beginning, Austen's burlesque focuses upon a miscellaneous assortment of mis-matched couples, ill-advised unions, and illicit liaisons: misalliances in love and friendship that clearly prefigure those "improprietous" and mad metonymic connections readers are compelled to contract throughout the narrative.[12] Alternately, her memorable parody of the conventional romance "revelation" scene in Lord St. Clair's precipitous discovery of a quartet of grandchildren,[13] or Laura's equally "unexpecte[d]" encounter of all her "nearest Relations and Connections" in the stagecoach to Edinburgh (103), suggestively

recapitulates the reader's own sudden discoveries of metaphoric or analogical "relations and connections" based on familiar resemblances. In the heterogeneous concatenations and mutual recognitions of Austen's characters, therefore, the "signifying game" between metonymy and metaphor is concretely dramatized.

There is indeed a "certain neatness in the nonsense" of "Love and Freindship," as G. K. Chesterton wrote some time ago (ix), and that neatness is perhaps nowhere more evident than wherever metaphoric or analogous associations founded on sound grounds of substitution or similarity suddenly disclose themselves. In other words, amidst the madness of Austen's metonymic style, "we see," with Lacan, how "metaphor occurs at the precise point at which sense emerges from nonsense" (Écrits 158). And the unpredictability, the essential irregularity with which metaphorical "sense" occasionally fires through the sometimes "unmeaning Gibberish" (81) of Austen's metonymic concatenations suggests the nature of the text's "madness" not as a simple or unequivocal "resistance to interpretation" (Martin 1989), but rather as a sort of erratic "rhythm" between sense and nonsense: "a rhythm that is unpredictable, incalculable, unsayable, but that is nonetheless . . . narratable as the story of the slippage of a reading between the excessive fullness and the excessive emptiness of meaning" (Felman, WM 254).

4. Staging the Movements of Madness: Austen's Coaching Metaphor

"Talk not to me of Phaetons," Laura first exclaims as she begins to "run mad" at the "horrid Spectacle" of Edward and Augustus's untimely ends (100, 99). But the fact of the matter remains that there is indeed

an inordinate amount of talk about, and focus upon, various types of coaches and carriages in "Love and Freindship." Remarking upon the evident "passion for travel" suggested by the recurrent appearance of "horse and carriage" in the juvenilia, Susan Gubar relates Austen's coaching motif to an authorial desire for "female escapes and escapades," the expression of a proto-feminist urge to elude the "cloistered and stilled life of domesticity" (Madwoman 123, 114). But the coaches which criss-cross the landscape of Austen's story--at various times ridden in, stolen, or just admired by the characters--also embody a fundamental significance in relation to the madness of the text's linguistic style, as the single most important instance of a metaphor that not only works, but works on the basis of a perhaps surprisingly literal or manifest similarity. One need only recall the etymology of the Greek "metaphorein," meaning "to carry or transport," to perceive the figurative function of Austen's vehicles as metaphors of metaphor itself, and, more precisely, as figures of the dynamic locomotion or ceaseless "transportation" of meaning that constitutes the "madness" of the text's "running" metonymic style. Invested with this particular symbolic cargo, Austen's stage coaches can ultimately be seen to chart a nascent thematization of linguistic style, a transformation of the "madness" of the text's rhetoric, the principle of movement itself, into something definitely other.

In more than one sense, the fiery "overturning of [the] Gentleman's Phaeton" (98-99) that proves to be the vehicle of Edward and Augustus's destruction provides a brilliant example of the figurative function of carriages within the narrative. Austen's choice of the Phaeton is, to begin with, highly appropriate within the context of her story, for like

Ovid's Phaeton, Edward also, before his ignoble crash, usurps "his Father's Carriage" (85). Axiomatically connoting the notion of chaos and loss of control, the Phaeton myth conveyed by Austen's Phaeton carriage--the eighteenth-century version of the sleek, luxury sports car--also afforded medical writers of the century with an apt paradigm of madness. In his Non Compos Mentis (1700), for example, John Brydall defined madness as a state in which, "Reason being . . . laid aside, Fancy gets the Ascendant, and Phaeton-like, drives on furiously and inconsistently" (53). A model which nicely embodies the madness of a narrative style that also happens to "drive on furiously and inconsistently," the Phaeton coach more concisely reflects the nature of metonymic movement, that abrupt shifting or displacement that is the ironic focus of Laura's description of the accident:

> We instantly quitted our seats & ran to the rescue of those who but a few minutes before had been in so elevated a situation as a fashionably high Phaeton, but who were now laid so low and sprawling in the Dust--. "What an ample subject for reflection on the uncertain Enjoyments of this World, would not that Phaeton & the life of Cardinal Wolsey afford a thinking Mind!" said I to Sophia. (99)

The displacement of the occupants of an unstable vehicle--likely travelling at unreasonable speeds--depicts the fate of the metonymically displaced signifier in Austen's narrative, and glosses the instability of language itself as a medium of communication: the "uncertain Enjoyments of this World" of words, which, like hapless Phaeton charioteers, are subject to sudden transpositions or overturnings that alter meaning and bewilder "a thinking Mind." The Phaeton episode's emphasis on Ovidian metamorphoses, changes, transformations of position and of meaning, thus work to distil the essence of the text's "madness of rhetoric" in a single, well-chosen visual metaphor.

That is not to say only one flashy, fickle Phaeton graphically conveys the madness of "Love and Freindship's" language and style. Humbler and homelier conveyances, too, such as the carriage Laura early on orders to Newgate to visit the incarcerated Edward and Augustus, are also associated with a vertiginous movement that metaphorically mimics that of Austen's narrative style, and that is quite explicitly seen to effect a fatal impediment to coherent communication. "No sooner," for instance, does Laura's rented vehicle enter the vicinity of Holborn than she begins to bellow inquiries of Edward's whereabouts from the coach window, at "every decent-looking Person" that she passes. "But, as we drove too rapidly to allow them to answer," she recalls, "I gained little, or indeed, no information concerning him" (89). As happens all too often in the course of this story, meaning appears to misfire somewhere between a sender who is carried on ahead of her own discourse, and a receiver who is left behind in her dust.

But this particular vehicular locomotion also marks the inauguration of a pervasive pattern of seemingly aimless relay that characterizes much of the traffic, not only in "Love and Freindship," but in other juvenile works as well. Just as the title character of "The Beautifull Cassandra" ascends a "Hackney Coach & order[s] it to Hampstead, where she [is] no sooner arrived than she order[s] the Coachman to turn around & drive her back again" (45), so "no sooner" does Laura command the postilion toward Newgate, than, out of concern for Sophia's greatly affected sensibility, she "instantly" directs him "to return into the Country" (89). Such abrupt turnings and returnings from point A to B and back again come as but a prelude to the eternal relay of the last stage-coaching scene of "Love and Freindship," which

occurs just after Sophia's death from the "galloping Consumption." Laura has "not walked many yards" from the "village"[14] in which her companion expires before she is "overtaken by a Stage-Coach," in which she instantly takes a place, "determined to proceed in it to Edinburgh," where, for no apparent reason, she hopes "to find some kind pitying Freind" (102). After daybreak discloses the identities of her "Fellow-travellers" to be none other than that of every living friend and relation she possesses, she learns that the coach represents the sole remaining possession of her wealthy old aunt Philippa and her husband, who, having squandered their fortune, now subsist by carrying passengers between Edinburgh and Sterling "every other day" (102, 105). That Austen's "last ride together" never really does end is signalled in the final line of Laura's "adventures," when she notes in retrospect that "Philippa has long paid the Debt of Nature, her husband however still continues to drive the Stage-Coach from Edinburgh to Sterling:--" (109). Laura's parting observation, which affords one last example of a run-on sentence, pivoting on the fulcrum of a comma splice, not only evokes the image of an incessant shuttle run, but grammatically reinforces it as well, by pointedly substituting a colon, followed by a final dash, in place of the conventional full stop.

Austen's striking focus on the unending shuttle-coach run at the end of "Love and Freindship"--an image she still vividly recalled in a letter to Cassandra some twenty-five years later[15]--would seem, at least partially, to belie Marvin Mudrick's contention that everything in this story "at last rounds out to [an] order . . . wholly unadventurous and domestic" (13-14). For "order" implies a logic that this deliberately inconclusive and still frenetic finale clearly resists. Instead, the

narrative's ultimate focus on the infinite rebound of a nameless, minor character, a "Fortune-hunter" (86) commended only for the "excell[ence]" of his single native "Talent," "namely, Driving" (105), only reinforces the essential craziness of this tale, and the unsated yearning for "Action" that is, throughout, inextricably linked to that craziness. More suggestively, as it relays back and forth, back and forth, from signpost to signpost, Austen's last stage suggests the movements of metaphor and metonymy themselves: in Kaja Silverman's words, "signifying formation" which together "facilitate a movement back and forth--a 'transversality'--not only between the two elements they conjoin, but between the primary and secondary processes, the unconscious and the preconscious" (110). And perhaps most emphatically, the shuttle coach metaphorically maps the loco-motions of the text's own "madness of rhetoric": "the madness of its unceasing and uncontrollable movement, its indefinite relay from one sign to another" (Felman, WM 87). A perfect image of "unaccomplishment at work," it suggests that "incessant sliding of signification, the very principle of movement and displacement" by which Austen's style actively resists "ever stopping at a final, literal fixed meaning" (Felman, WM 215).

Paradoxically, however, even as Austen's shuttle-run metaphor accurately reflects the text's stylistic subversion of finished meaning, what becomes fully apparent in the metaphoricity of the madness of language is, to use Felman's terms, precisely the transformation of a "madness of rhetoric," defined as "the active incompletion of a meaning," into a "rhetoric of madness," a self-reflective and complete discourse or thought about madness. In one respect, it could be argued that implicit in the heightened theatricality of Austen's focus on a

"Coach . . . converted into a Stage" (105) is a rhetorical process to some degree conscious of itself. For this stagey coach functions, indeed, not merely as a vehicle of plot, for the characters' final rehearsals of their life stories, but as a vehicle that also figuratively "stages" and thus thematizes the action of the text's rhetorical style at the metalinguistic or metafictional level of a narrative gesturing toward the operations of its own language. Whether that is actually so, or whether such a reading would say more about the interpreter's own consciousness of the text's rhetorical processes, is, perhaps, a moot point. We might assign it a cognitively undecidable status. What is, at any rate, more to the point is the effect, which is similar in either event. As Felman puts it, "any rhetorical movement that reaches consciousness, that makes its meaning explicit, that ends its motion in a finite thought, is transformed into a theme," its essence as a protean, pure act negated (WM 95). An arresting enfiguration of the text's "running mad" style--and its very desire to continue doing so--the eternally returning shuttle coach embodies a final irony in that it does signal the arrest of that rhetorical loco-motion the moment one interprets it as such, thereby "catching" a meaning that no longer "runs." As the fleet-footed nymph Daphne transforms at the touch of the breath of her pursuer, so the "madness" of a literary work's rhetoric will continue to elude us when we attempt to "master" it by grasping it, by necessarily halting its motion in "a finite thought."

Ultimately, to do so, to impose "the calm of a final truth" (Felman, WM 95) on the madness of a text that keeps running away from readers, rhetorically speaking, would itself amount to a repressive act

of interpretive "madness": an illusory foreclosure of meaning's mad multiplication and metamorphoses in "Love and Freindship." And although my running commentary on Austen's juvenilia will end on that indefinite note, I suspect, at this point, that were she alive, Jane Austen might still be the first to protest, to chide me for making some rather too serious claims for a teenage lark--tossed off for family fun in a fortnight, perhaps, and then locked away for over a century by ancestors too embarrassed to publish such "nonsense." But "Love and Freindship," which Virginia Woolf, for one, immediately recognized as a most "astonishing and unchildish story" (Common Reader 169), is indeed written with "an uncanny cleverness and sparkle" (Hopkins 36), and its "nonsense" is also its genius. Though a minor work, it is one of those literary achievements that, as the saying goes, just thinks more than it thinks it thinks, as it races along the expressways of signification.

PART II:

FLESH

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BODY MELANCHOLY:

TROLLOPE'S HE KNEW HE WAS RIGHT

> I live a living death, my flesh is wounded, bleeding, cadaverized, my rhythm slowed down or interrupted, time has been erased or bloated, absorbed into sorrow.
>
> - Julia Kristeva, Black Sun, 1989

> Only this I will add, that if it be considered aright, which causeth this jealous passion, be it just or unjust, whether with or without cause, true or false, it ought not so heinously to be taken; 'tis no such real or capital matter. 'Tis a blow that hurts not, an insensible smart, grounded many times upon false suspicion alone, and so fostered by a sinister conceit.
>
> - Robert Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy, 1621

> Why should the most active characteristics of our nature be termed the Passions? The word seems properly employed in Passion Week, the period commemorative of Christ's suffering or Passion. But we are said to fly or fall into a passion . . . and most persons agree that passion, carried to excess, constitutes madness--we live in a world of metaphor.
>
> - John Haslam, Observations on Madness and Melancholy, 1809

1. The Melancholic Roots of Monomania

"The psychopathology of He Knew He Was Right," declares John Sutherland, "is as mid-Victorian as its creator," and the model for the "anatomy of jealousy" that Trollope presents in his central protagonist, Louis Trevelyan, "is taken quite evidently," he suggests, from the influential early nineteenth-century work of Jean Etienne Esquirol: more particularly, from the French theorist's concept of a new disease entity called monomania.[1] "Mono-maniacal," as Sutherland notes, is the diagnosis ultimately arrived at within Trollope's 1869 novel to describe

the fixed obsession of Trevelyan (900): a character who, according to the narrator, though lucid in other respects, "was, in truth, mad on the subject of his wife's alleged infidelity" (361). Certainly, Trollope's use of the term "monomania," a word which formed the technical basis of the first medicalized insanity defenses in history, accurately reflects his novel's wider thematic concerns with problematic new medico-legal definitions of insanity and questions of responsibility in mental disease. For "partial insanities" such as monomania raised for the Victorians the perplexing possibility that a man like Trevelyan might be deemed "neither mad nor sane;--not mad, so that all power over his actions need be taken from him; nor sane, so that he must be held accountable for his words and thoughts" (902). It is, in fact, the text's scrutiny of the social, legal, and ethical implications of such a new recognized medical condition which imparts a distinctively contemporary accent to an otherwise familiar main plot: showing how, that is, Trollope's self-conscious use of the Othello story in He Knew He Was Right "goes further than association or allusion" to "examine the relevance of Shakespeare's play to mid-Victorian society" (Gatrell 95).

Though obviously pertinent to certain aspects of the text, it is my position that the contemporary medico-legal discourse of monomania is to Trollope's "anatomy of jealousy" as outer epidermis to innards. For subtending the "time-bound" "vogue" of monomania, which flourished but fleetingly as a popular diagnostic category between 1830 and 1870 (Goldstein, Console 155), the altogether more ancient and amorphous pathological entity of melancholy signals its ubiquitous presence: its bilious vapors, eluding the precise syntax of a clinical syndrome, pervade body and brain as a lowering affect, a lugubrious mood, and

exude through the pores of the nineteenth-century monomaniac. In his introduction to Trollope's text, Sutherland himself, in fact, observes that "Esquirol's theory [of monomania] drew strongly on the traditional symptomatology of melancholy" (xiv). But the intimate, indeed familial, relationship between the two is perhaps more accurately underscored by the fact that monomania, or at least the presence of a monomania-like delusive obsession, had itself long been cited as a symptom or standard feature of melancholic disorders.[2]

In her study of the nineteenth-century French psychiatric scene, Jan Goldstein thoroughly explores the "tactical considerations" that motivated Esquirol, around 1810, to renovate the classificatory system of mental diseases by, in effect, pruning the symptom of the single predominating idea or delusion from its parent genus, melancholy, and assigning it a separate nosological status. According to Goldstein, the value of the monomania concept never inhered in any intrinsic scientific substance, for as a clinical entity, it remained riddled with holes and internal inconsistencies, especially in regard to the ambiguous status of the passions.[3] The concept's worth lay rather in its "external" efficiency: more scientific sounding than the "black humour" of melancholy, with its long trail of poetic, popular, and otherwise heterogeneous connotations, the diagnostic category of monomania proved a pivotal element in the professional boundary dispute between the law and the nascent speciality of forensic psychiatry (Goldstein, Console 177-78, 192). Esquirol's concept, duly promoted by his student Georget, was an efficacious means of "carving a larger professional niche for the medical alienist" in the nineteenth-century courtroom, but by mid-century, as Goldstein shows, its fortunes were already waning under

attack from prominent members of the medical community (Console 192, 189-90). Ironically, by the latter third of the century, some psychiatrists were actually attempting to purge the term "monomania" from the technical vocabulary as deliberately as Esquirol had earlier "jettison[ed]" the word "melancholy" in search of a more specialized medical lexicon (Goldstein, Console 189-91, 156). It is noteworthy, too, that late-century writers who did retain Esquirol's classification nevertheless seem to have reverted to emphasizing monomania as a subsidiary manifestation of melancholia.[4]

The historical origins of monomania and the relative superficiality of its diagnostic trend in the nineteenth century constitute a compelling basis, then, for suggesting that the "anatomy of jealousy" in He Knew He Was Right also needs to be firmly situated in the context of an anatomy of melancholy. For in Trollope's novel, the melancholic roots of Louis Trevelyan's "mono-maniacal" disorder are everywhere apparent in the semiological and iconographic dimensions of his psychopathology. Embracing a medical and literary tradition far from strictly mid-Victorian in scope, melancholy informs the representation of insanity in Trollope's text in a way that, in fact, uniquely illustrates how "various levels of historical consciousness [may be] present in a given model of disease" (Gilman 9).

2. The Body Melancholy: From Burton to Trollope and Beyond

In his Anatomy of Melancholy, Robert Burton, drawing upon ancient Greek humoral theory, distinguishes between three basic kinds of melancholy "by reason of their seat," or the anatomical region from which the black humor was believed to proceed. As opposed to "head

melancholy" and "windy" or "hypochondriacal melancholy," disorders respectively engendered in brain and bowel, "body melancholy," the third type, appears a more comprehensive species of derangement. The author describes it as a complaint that "sympathetically proceeds from the whole body, when the whole temperature is melancholy" (153-54). Burton's notion of a "melancholy from the whole body" (324) is as suggestive in relation to Trollope's Louis Trevelyan as his subsequently advanced conception of a species of jealous melancholy, a "bastard branch, or kind of Love-Melancholy" (832).[5] For Trevelyan is presented as a man of "moody temperament" (787) whose peevish humor appears to proceed "sympathetically from the whole body" insofar as his jealous torments and woes eventually culminate in a case of complete organic exhaustion: his is a dark affliction that broods in brain and body both, "wasting" the whole man, intellectually and physically.

In this chapter, however, I am less interested in "diagnosing" the figure of Trevelyan with any specific form of melancholy, than I am concerned to explore the forms and dimensions of the body that is melancholy. Trevelyan's own physical form, to begin with, incarnates quintessential characteristics of the melancholic anatomy: from his physiognomy and body type, to his gestural mannerisms, and even the attitudes and postures he adopts within distinct topological settings, the array of corporal symptomatology Trollope presents in this character import a range of variously nuanced registers from the voluptuous historical legacy of melancholia. Importantly, though, in Trollope's novel, as in much of the earlier literature on melancholy, including Burton's Anatomy, the melancholy body is not to be construed as pertaining exclusively to an individual, anatomical body. Indeed,

mental symptoms of the disease, metaphorically embodied, also construct a "body" of rhetorical dimensions: the "figure" of a melancholy body that is essentially ordered within and intrinsic to the realm of symbolic representation. In He Knew He Was Right, Trollope, for instance, typically renders mental states or symptoms of melancholy, such as Trevelyan's jealous obsession, or affects of sorrow and grief, either directly or indirectly in terms of corporal metaphors: a physical burden or load, an organic tumor-like growth, a flesh wound, or an injury. At least in this respect, it might be said that the body melancholy proves an entity which "proceeds" as profoundly from a "whole body" of language as from a whole physiological body. And so in turning to the dimension of corporal symptomatology, one never really leaves the world of words.

Such a distinction between the physiological and figurative seems requisite, for although they coincide at crucial points, corporal and metaphorical figures of the melancholy body do not emerge from Trollope's text as entirely homologous equivalents: the sum of symptoms structuring the one does not amount to the anatomy of the other. More precisely, the anatomy of the metaphorical body, transindividual and supplemented by fictive or mythic signs, is not in the end reducible to its physiological counterpart in the anatomy of Louis Trevelyan.

Both the physiological and figurative symptoms of the body melancholy established by Trollope can be approached from a diachronic, historical perspective which seeks to recover the conceptual antecedents informing his text. As symbolic structures, however, these symptoms also invite one to incorporate the insights of subsequent writers on melancholia, such as Freud and Kristeva. Far from constituting an

inherently anachronistic exercise in "retrojecting Freudian . . . notions into [Trollope's] narrative" (Sutherland xiv), such an approach serves rather to illustrate how the literary imagination in fact tends to anticipate and shape, to a certain extent, advances in scientific or clinical knowledge. At the same time, it provides one with a theoretical framework through which to explore the psychological and semiotic dynamics subtending Louis Trevelyan's melancholic symptoms.

In particular, it is illuminating to chart the development of the commonplace metaphorical symptom of the bodily wound beyond Trollope's text to its theoretical elaboration in Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917), where it figures as the representative analogy of a neurotic "melancholic complex" precipitated by object loss. By foregrounding the cycle of sadomasochism implicit in Trollope's depiction of the relationship between Trevelyan's mental sorrows and bodily sufferings, Freud's essay provides a context in which it is possible to make some sense of the fundamentally contradictory manifestations of the "jealous melancholy" of a wounded ego.

More broadly, the mutual implication of physiology and language in Trollope's representation of melancholic symptomatology prefigures a major preoccupation of Kristeva in her recent thought on the semiotic parameters and processes of depressive disorders. For in tracing the interplay of language and body throughout the course of Trevelyan's malady, Trollope is like Kristeva in his evident fascination with the existence and importance of discrete yet dynamic gradations of signification. And importantly, as opposed to his representation of the melancholy body, which relies fundamentally upon rhetorical figures to flesh itself out, Trollope's analysis of the actual "modification of

signifying bonds" characteristic of melancholia (Kristeva, Black Sun 10) points conversely to the way in which Trevelyan's progressive illness--rather like the madness of Gilman's yellow wallpaper--actually entails a sort of "break" with language: in this case, a regression to non-verbal and preverbal levels of cognition and communication. Ultimately, it is Trevelyan's increasingly pronounced melancholic alienation and retreat from verbal modes of symbolization that raise, in the end, intriguing questions as to the theoretical implications of the reliance upon metaphor in literary and psychoanalytic representations and anatomizations of melancholy in general.

3. Aspects of the Physiological Body

For nearly the first two hundred pages of Trollope's novel, it is not immediately self-evident that Louis Trevelyan is a man of melancholy "temperature." "Fear & Sorrow are the true characters and inseparable companions . . . of most melancholy," as Burton informs us (149), but anger or wrath is the affect most in evidence in the early scenes of the great quarrel between Louis and Emily Trevelyan. In a nutshell, Trevelyan is a wealthy, accomplished, insufferably proud and domineering husband, who, at the novel's outset, feels his wife's honor (and his own) is in danger of being compromised by the less-than-strictly-proprietous attentions of an "ancient Lothario" by the name of Colonel Osborne (7). Emily Trevelyan, a match for her husband in spirit and pride, if not in social status, is keenly provoked by her husband's insulting (and, she believes, absurd) imputation against a man she regards as an old family friend. Trevelyan's struggle for "mastery" and wifely submission begins: he issues commands that Emily cease to see or

correspond with Osborne, then vacillates, rescinds his orders, and is furious when his wife proves the more steadfast and has the temerity to remind him that he "must not blow hot and cold too" (51). The situation deteriorates apace, Trevelyan becoming more and more rash in his accusations, more and more irrational in his labile demands, while the exasperated Emily assiduously cultivates a sense of righteous indignation and only hardens her position with respect to the innocence of both her own conduct and the intentions of Colonel Osborne. Eventually, stymied by Emily's staunch refusal to show herself "sufficiently broken in spirit" by "own[ing] that she had been wrong" (175), the irate pater familias breaks up his household, banishing wife and child to a life of provincial seclusion.

But as the prospect of separation looms, it becomes increasingly apparent that the jealous husband's hot-tempered choler is but half of a passional admixture: a foul melan-choler that smacks of "great grief" and "absolute wretchedness" as well as anger (96, 98). Trevelyan is conscious of the price of his obstinacy: "All my hopes and prospects in life," he professes to Emily, "will be blighted by such a separation" (96). After the fact, the narrator confirms Trevelyan's estimate of the personal impact of the separation:

> He was very wretched at this time,--so wretched that life was a burden to him. He was a man who loved his wife;--to whom his child was very dear; and he was one too to whom the ordinary comforts of domestic life were attractive and necessary. . . . There was no delight to him in being able to dine at his club, and being free to go whither he pleased in the evenings; and his mornings were equally blank to him. (174)

It is while Trevelyan "liv[es] on a wretched life in London," alone, talking obsessively to friends "of the grief with which his mind was

laden" (175-76), that his behavior begins to evince a more acute note of paranoid desperation and fear. He hires a duplicitous ex-policeman to spy on Emily and the whereabouts of her suspected paramour. "In these days of his madness," as the narrator phrases it, "he took Mr. Bozzle into his pay" (177). "From morning to night," we read later, Trevelyan "sang to himself melancholy, silent songs, as to the cruelty of his own lot in life;--and, in the meantime, he employed Bozzle to find out how far that cruelty was carried" (318).

Over and above the increasingly frequent narrative references to Trevelyan's misery and anguish, however, his melancholy is a story vividly inscribed in the corporal symptoms he soon begins to manifest. Emily Trevelyan eventually adopts mourning garb to symbolize her forsaken status, but Trollope's husband does not merely wear his heart on his sleeve, so to speak. His melancholy is signalled by more than an alteration of dress (which becomes decidedly more shabby and eccentric as the novel progresses): it is a condition announced by a profound physical transformation of limb and lineament.

At the novel's opening, there is evidently nothing amiss with the twenty-four-year-old anatomy of Trevelyan, who is described as "such a handsome, manly fellow, with short brown hair, a nose divinely chiselled, an Apollo's mouth, six feet high, with shoulders and legs and arms in proportion,--a pearl of pearls!" (3). How strangely the "pearl of pearls" has altered, is Emily's first thought upon seeing Trevelyan again, a few months after their parting: "She thought that she would have hardly known him, had she not been sure that it was he." Emily herself is also "changed" by "sorrow," the narrator comments, "[b]ut the effect on her was as nothing to that which grief, remorse, and

desolation had made on him" (568). "[L]achrymose, heartbroken, and a sight pitiable to behold" (566), Trevelyan is also hardly recognizable to family friends, who, in the second half of the novel, continue to intercede in futile attempts to reconcile husband and wife, and to note in graphic detail the extent of his changed aspect:

> His cheeks were thin and haggard, and his eyes were deep and very bright,--and he moved them quickly from side to side, as though ever suspecting something. He seemed to be smaller in stature,--withered as it were, as though he had melted away. (633)

> He was as wretched a being to look at as it might have been possible to find. His contracted cheeks and lips, always open, and eyes glowing in their sunken caverns, told a tale which even Sir Marmaduke, who was not of nature quick in deciphering such stories, could not fail to read. (649-50)

> His beard had been allowed to grow, and he had neither collar nor cravat. His trousers were unbraced, and he shuffled in with a pair of slippers which would hardly cling to his feet. He was paler and still thinner than when he had visited at Willesden, and his eyes seemed to be larger, and shone almost with a brighter brilliancy. (734)

> His hand was mere skin and bone. His hair and beard so covered his thin long cheeks, that there was nothing left of his face but his bright, large, melancholy eyes. His legs had become so frail and weak that they would hardly bear his weight as he walked; and his clothes . . . hung so loose about him that they seemed as though they would fall from him. (854)

A "tale" told by the feverish "melancholy eyes" which become the focal point of Trevelyan's shrinking physical being, Louis' illness includes such typical symptoms of melancholy as anorexia, insomnia, and profuse perspiration, and takes the form of a literal self-consumption, a "wasting" of flesh, muscle, and vital fluids which, ultimately, leaves little more than skeletal remains. His perfectly proportioned physique now disfigured by a noticeably "bent" back (640), Trevelyan's warped body mirrors his warped judgment: his increasingly impaired sense of

the magnitude of Emily's "transgression" or "sin." "[L]ean, withered, [and] hollow-eyed," with the "dejected looks" and "flaggy beard" Burton notes as "signs of melancholy in the body" (326), Trollope's protagonist also physically resembles the mournful sailor-king Pericles, in that once "his happiness [is] shipwrecked" (363, 253), he allows his short hair to grow long and refuses to shave (741).

The melancholy distemper which can be "read" in Trevelyan's altered physiognomy and stature is also apparent in his physical mannerisms. Conventionally, of course, melancholia and depression are most immediately associated with forms of neurophysiological slowdown: a mental and motor lethargy that the ancients attributed to constricted blood vessels and a turgid blood flow; but also a retardation that in another respect contrasts precisely with that "running" madness characteristic of Jane Austen's juvenile prose. In Trollope's novel, however, Trevelyan's fiery jealousy often causes melancholic slow-commotion to assume a more manic aspect, as his suspicious, darting eyes suggest. His symptomatology in this respect corresponds to "those strange gestures of staring, frowning, grinning, rolling of eyes" and "broken pace, interrupt, precipitate half-turns" recorded by Burton as manifestations of "jealous melancholy" (840-41). But in Trollope's own time, Trevelyan's repertoire of teeth gnashing and fist clenching (260, 424), hair tearing, arm waving, and room pacing (246, 590, 808) may well have been regarded as prominent symptoms of "acute melancholia." According to Henry Maudsley, this form of disorder was characterized by

> [r]estless pacing up and down the room or unquiet wanderings from room to room, . . . perpetual moanings and groanings, rockings of the body to and fro, wringing of hands, beating of head and face . . . , pulling out of hair, biting of nails to the quick,--these and like gestures and acts of unrest and grief betray the active misery which, agitation being its

> chief note, has sometimes received the name of melancholia agitata. Between it and the opposite state of melancholic stupor, . . . there are intermediate cases marked by varying states of torpor and agitation. (Pathology of Mind 205)

Although alternating with increasingly prolonged lapses into contemplative silence and gloomy meditation, Trevelyan's nervous tics and fits of agitation elicit almost as much commentary from other characters as does his changed appearance. They remark upon "the twitching motion of the man's hands, and the restless shuffling of his feet" (650); at times, as Lady Rowley notes, "he was not for a moment still," but continually changing "the posture of his hands and arms, moving them quickly with little surreptitious jerks," and "shuffl[ing] his feet upon the floor, almost without altering his position" (633). When others attempt to expostulate with Trevelyan, his excitement becomes so great that he proceeds to "stalk up and down the room, waving his hand in the air, as though he were continuing his speech"--even after his auditors leave him (592). Through "these and like gestures and acts of unrest and grief," then, Trollope indicates the rather paradoxically hyperactive nature of his protagonist's melancholy body.

"Above all things," Burton avers in his Anatomy, any body that is melancholy "love[s] solitariness" (336). In Trollope's novel, Trevelyan's physical withdrawal from society to Casalunga, the remote seat of his Italian self-exile, is presented as a definitive, symptomatic gesture of melancholic alienation. As isolated behind the "huge . . . wooden gateway" of Casalunga (731) as Milton's "pensive nun" in her convent cloister, or Johnson's mad astronomer in his tower, Trevelyan plays out his private version of "Il Penseroso" in the context of a recognizable pre-scripted iconographic tradition of melancholy. At

Casalunga, he lives the "life of [a] wretched hermit" (883) in a setting which externalizes the mental topography of the melancholic man. Since marital woes have turned "[e]verything for him now . . . hot and dry and poor and bitter" (634), Trevelyan chooses a deserted winery atop a sun-scorched hill for his new abode. Here, "the intensity of his solitude" (853) is matched only by the intensity of the sun's heat, which bakes the "brown, and arid" earth (733) and parches the vegetation into "a faded yellowish green" (867). Even sickly foliage vividly colors forth the complexion of Trevelyan's distemper, suggesting "a green and yellow melancholy" akin to that of the lovelorn Viola's in Twelfth Night (2.4).[6]

Like the melancholy sufferers Burton describes, who "delight to walk alone in some solitary Grove" or orchard (214), Trevelyan haunts the olive groves at Casalunga, as often and as far as his strength allows him:

> He went out from the house, and made his way down by the narrow path through the olives and vines to the bottom of the hill in front of the villa. It was evening now, but the evening was very hot, and though the olive trees stood in long rows, there was no shade. Quite at the bottom of the hill there was a sluggish muddy brook, along the sides of which the reeds grew thickly and the dragonflies were playing on the water. There was nothing attractive in the spot, but he was weary, and sat himself down on the hard dry bank. . . . He sat watching the dragonflies . . . and told himself that of all God's creatures there was not one to whom less power of disporting itself in God's sun was given than to him. Surely it would be better for him that he should die, than live as he was now living without any of the joys of life. (789-90)

In his recurrent "reverie[s]" among the olive trees (809) and upon the bank, Trollope's "philosopher" (869) strikes the very air and attitude of that "melancholizing" philosopher that Burton's "Democritus Junior" himself emulates. "One of the chiefest reasons" Democritus was

suspected "to be melancholy and mad," we are told in the Anatomy, was precisely "because . . . he forsook the City, lived in groves and hollow trees, upon a green bank by a brook side, or confluence of waters, all day long, and all night" (337). Through his subtle employment of similar scenic details, Trollope is able to evoke the same ambience of bittersweet pastoral nostalgia that infuses the aesthetic tradition of melancholy, even in the midst of Trevelyan's semi-arid Italian wasteland. And so from symptoms of the body to signs of the setting in which it is situated, the semiology of Trevelyan's psychopathology sketches the contours of an anatomy of melancholy.

4. Figures of the Body Melancholy

In some respects, the metaphorical dimension of melancholy in He Knew He Was Right corresponds with, and even imaginatively accounts for, certain morbid features of the physiological body surveyed above. Trevelyan's crooked back, for instance, can be regarded as a corporal realization and expression of his acute mental perception of the staggering "weight" of his grievances and miseries, a prominent figurative motif which attends his gradual physical transformation. "The slightest rumour on a woman's name is a load of infamy on her husband's shoulders," Trevelyan thinks to himself early in the narrative (43). It is a conceit he subsequently articulates to others through a similar, recurrent allusion:

> People choose to say that I am to blame and they may say so for me. Nothing that any one may say can add anything to the weight that I have to bear. (358-59)

> [Emily] came here the other day, almost as a stranger, and I thought my heart would burst beneath its weight of woe. What can you do that can add an ounce to the burden that I bear? (649)

According to Stanley Jackson, the metaphor of the oppressive burden or weight, associated with a "drooping body posture," is one which "stand[s] out in the long history of melancholia" from Galenic times (396-97).[7] But Trollope's use of the trope bears a relevance more specific to his text as well. Though other characters, such as Emily, are not, like Louis Trevelyan, actually physically cast down by their "load of sorrows," they do occasionally speak of themselves in such terms (575), and to that extent, the image of the burdened melancholy body begins to establish a figurative frame of reference which transcends the physical frame of Trevelyan himself.

That the body melancholy, as a metaphorical construct, is not coextensive with the individual body in Trollope's text is also suggested by the figurative symptom of "the black frown" which settles upon "the brow" and face (12): a trademark of Trevelyan's "jealous melancholy," to be sure, but one Trollope also employs in relation to other characters of choleric complexion such as Emily (570) and her father, Sir Marmaduke (845). "Black" looks are indeed most evidently associated by Trollope with the passion of anger: the black "cloud" that Emily and Lady Millborough witness darkening Trevelyan's face (51, 26) functions as an index of rising fury that both women learn to recognize; it is "the angry brow" (259), "the old look" that the man who would be master assumes when spewing "the bitterness of his wrath" (923). But blackness is, of course, an attribute also inextricably related to the mythopoesis of melancholic semiology, to the very matter of the hypothetical "humour" or "juice" once imagined the causal agent of the illness. As in Burton's work, so in Trollope's novel do "black" faces and brows evoke the mythic material essence of melancholy: that "sort

of melaina (black) chole (choler), from black choler," or those "fuliginous and black spirits" thought to "arise form the other parts [of the body], and fume up into the head" of the sufferer (Anatomy 148, 321, 320).

With an appropriately dark emphasis, then, the faces of black choler in Trollope's text better underscore the sorts of fundamental distinctions emerging between the figurative and physiological symptoms of the body melancholy. Metaphoric signs of melancholy, that is, are not simply monoreferential in terms of a specific character's body, but they are also signs not necessarily answerable to any objective, physiological referent whatsoever. As Sander Gilman has suggested in his Disease and Representation, the symptom of black bile in this respect affords the clearest illustration of the "mythmaking that usually surrounds fictive signs or symptoms, . . . as a means of representing an invisible state--mental illness" (19).

The human tendency described by Gilman, to concretize and thus securely "locate" invisible forces of mental pathology "in" identifiable, if fictive, signs such as black bile, is similarly manifest in nineteenth-century approaches to intangible mental signs of melancholy, such as the "monomaniacal" obsession or delusion. In one of his works, for example, Henry Maudsley compares the monomaniacal fixation to "a morbid growth in some organ of the body . . . which cannot be brought under the correcting influence of the surrounding healthy tissues" (Physiology 324). And in Trollope's novel, Trevelyan's jealous obsession has, similarly, struck critics as appearing to "gro[w] with the inevitability of a natural growth" (Gatrell 112), like some cancerous tumor. The way in which Trollope achieves such a figurative

effect without directly rendering this aspect of Trevelyan's melancholy in metaphorical terms of tumorous growths deserves closer attention.

In essence, the strategy Trollope relies upon might be characterized as one of displaced metaphor, or more precisely, metaphor displaced in metonym. He conveys the effect of the organic tumor, that is, through the implicit comparison he draws between his protagonist's ever-escalating delusion and an unsightly "growth" that functions as a prominent metonym in the novel's comic subplot, namely, Arabella French's outrageous chignon. Michael Riffaterre has observed that "the chignon sub-text" operates as "a hermeneutic model that dictates the reader's interpretation of the main plot" (285). The ever-vacillating and reluctant bridegroom, Reverend Gibson, he shows, develops an almost hysterical "idée fixe" about Arabella's prized hairpiece that eventually "takes on epic proportions," thus creating a humorous parallel to Trevelyan's more tragic idée fixe in the high plot (287, 285).[8]

For my purposes, however, the essential similarity between Trevelyan's jealous delusion and the very "thing" that Arabella French "carrie[s] on her head" as bait for a bridegroom is also worth elaborating (446). That the hairpiece serves as a tangible equivalent of Trevelyan's mental obsession is suggested by the "monstrous" and distinctly pathological attributes it eventually takes on in the eyes of Reverend Gilman: "he thought that he never in his life had seen anything so unshapely as that huge wen at the back of [Arabella's] head: 'Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens!'" (441). The Reverend's invocation of "an awful, hideous, huge monster" distantly echoes Colonel Osborne's earlier monitory allusion to Emily, regarding Trevelyan's inflamed suspicions: "the green-eyed monster is of all monsters, the

most monstrous,--and the most unreasonable" (89). Like Arabella's "huge wen," Trevelyan's jealousy also increases in scope, growing "bigger and bigger, more shapeless, monstrous, absurd, and abominable" as the plot unfolds (443). Just as Arabella appears to Gibson to be "perishing beneath an incubus which a false idea of fashion had imposed on her" (445), so too does it become manifest to the reader that Trevelyan "perishes" beneath the green-eyed "incubus" of a jealousy which false ideas of honor and pride impose upon him.

As was the case with the sign of black choler, Trollope's clever use of the chignon metonym graphically embodies an ideational or psychological phenomenon in anatomical terms: in this instance, an inner deformity of the melancholic mind projected as an outer deformity of the person. For as an unnatural, grotesque appendage on the back of her head, "bigger than the place inside where her brains ought to be" (211), Arabella's chignon[9] brilliantly serves as an externalized proxy of that burgeoning, malignant delusion which only less comically overwhelms Trevelyan's brain cavity.

Perhaps the most pervasive metaphorical constituent of the body melancholy in Trollope's text, however, is that of the flesh wound or sore, by which the mental affects of pain and anguish associated with melancholy are similarly rendered incarnate. The figure of the melancholic wound, another veritable cliché in historical representations of the disease, receives particular attention from Burton in his discussion of "Jealous Melancholy." Though Burton strenuously objects as to the "incurability" of such wounds, he cites Ariosto on the matter at length:

> This is that cruel wound, against whose smart
> No liquor's force prevails, or any plaster,
> No skill of stars, no depth of magick art,
> Devised by that great clerk Zoroaster;
> A wound that so infects the soul and heart,
> As all our sense and reason it doth master:
> A wound whose pang and torment is so durable,
> As it may rightly called be incurable. (848)

While Burton is concerned to emphasize of the melancholic wound that "'tis no such real or capital matter," "'tis a blow that hurts not, an insensible smart, grounded many times upon false suspicion alone" (849), John Haslam, in 1809, focuses upon the etymological roots of the word "sorrow" to stress quite the opposite. Haslam notes that the term "sorrow," though denoting a mental state or feeling, originally carried the sense of bodily "sufferance": sore, sorry, and sorrow, he points out, are all cognates, initially grounded upon the corporal experience of pain (9). The extent to which sorrow, sorriness, and bodily sufferance are profoundly interrelated elements in iconographic traditions associated with melancholia is perhaps nowhere more dramatically illustrated than in Christian representations of Christ's Passion and death, where the scourged, flogged, crucified "Man of Sorrows" suffers in the flesh as an act of supreme atonement.[10]

In He Knew He Was Right, the melancholy sorrows of both Emily and Louis Trevelyan are consistently prefigured as forms of bodily sufferance that tap into the related tradition of Christian martyrdom and sacrifice. Wounds symbolically sustained appear in the early chapters as angry sores, sores that arise from a sense of injured pride. When Louis, for example, first instructs his wife to forward to him, unopened, all correspondence from Colonel Osborne, and then promptly receives a note from that gentleman, addressed to Emily and containing

purely innocent information regarding the Rowley family, he knows that "he had created for himself a terrible trouble": "He must tell his wife what was in the letter, but the very telling of it would be a renewing of the soreness of his wound" (50). Any time thereafter that Emily chances "even [to] imply that she need forget,--that she should forgive," rather than "accept forgiveness" from Louis (744), the husband's wound bleeds anew: "As it was, her words wounded him in that spot of his inner self which was most sensitive,--on that spot from whence had come all his fury. A black cloud came upon his brow" (634). Reciprocally, Louis' words wound Emily: she "undergo[es]" her husband's "wise words" about the wicked ways of the world as a form of "infliction" that leaves her feeling "injured and aggrieved" (89). With each believing himself or herself the party "more sinned against than sinning," "each was so sore that no approach to terms" is possible (105).

Yet gradually, the "sore and angry" (26) wounds of the combative couple temper into wounds of sorrow and sorriness. For the jealous husband, Trollope hints, this subtle change may come with the sad realization that perhaps Ariosto was right:

> He had not considered, when his resolutions to this effect were first forming themselves, that a separation between a man and his wife once effected cannot be annulled, and as it were cured, so as to leave no cicatrice behind. Gradually, as he spent day after day thinking on this one subject, he came to feel that even were his wife to submit, to own her fault humbly, and to come back to him, this very coming back would in itself be a new wound. (362)

Initial regret at the scars of separation is here apparently subsumed by Trevelyan's obsessive, bitter belief that even the very cure he calls upon to heal his wound, Emily's contrition, would only serve to

exacerbate the injury: this, it seems, is a jealous wound which "infects" and "masters" "sense and reason" indeed.

As the nature of Trevelyan's wound alters from a maddening smart to a more melancholy pang, perversely and sadly incurable, his attitude toward suffering alters as well. At the beginning of the novel, Trevelyan exclaims to himself: "I am sorry that [Emily] should suffer; but it is better that she should suffer a little now, than that we should both suffer much by-and-by" (28-29). Near the end of the text, however, the narrator notes that Louis "declared to himself over and over again that it was better that he should suffer than that others should be punished" (786-87). This seemingly dramatic reversal from one who wished to make others suffer to one who wishes to suffer in their stead is confirmed at other points in the narrative, especially in Trevelyan's increasingly marked tendency to submit himself willingly to fresh and gratuitous symbolic wounds from the odious Bozzle. "Bozzle said things, and made suggestions to him which were as bad as pins stuck into his flesh" (317). "Every word" of Bozzle's letters is like "a dagger to Trevelyan, and yet he felt himself to be under an obligation to the man" (421).

Burton often refers casually to melancholy as a "malady . . . that . . . crucifies body and mind" (102), but in Trollope's work Trevelyan's ready submission to a form of symbolic crucifixion at Bozzle's hands carefully prepares the ground for the ultimate apotheosis of melancholy sorrow and suffering as a form of Christian "Self-Sacrifice" (ch. 84). The immediate context of the scene is that of Trevelyan's decision, at Casalunga, to return to the custody of Emily the child he has surreptitiously snatched from her:

> It was impossible that he should yield;--but it was yet open to him to sacrifice himself. He could not go back to his wife and say that he was wrong; but he could determine that the destruction should fall upon him and not upon her. (788)

Offering up his only son, Louis Jr., is Louis Sr.'s way of offering up himself.[11] And it is in this tragically noble self-conception that Trevelyan's melancholy "wound" can be seen to find its metaphoric culmination in a sacrificial act distantly analogous to that of the impaled and bleeding "Man of Sorrows" on the cross.

Emily, meanwhile, is eventually moved from the soreness of wrath to that of sorrow by Trevelyan's more and more visible bodily suffering. En route to England after Casalunga, "Trevelyan," as the narrator notes, "allowed himself to be carried in and out of . . . carriages and up and down . . . hotel stairs almost as though he were a child" (882). It is this pathetic physical feebleness that ultimately prompts the wife, in effect, to "forgive" the husband by asking forgiveness of him upon her knees (884). Later, Emily explains to her sister Nora:

> 'He is so weak . . . . He can hardly speak . . . . I have told him just simply that it was all my doing,--that I have been in fault all through . . . . What does it matter? He had suffered so, that I would have said worse than that just to give him relief.' (894)

Even though Emily proceeds to compare her false confession to a form of violent martyrdom--"My nails have been dragged out, and I have been willing to confess anything," she exclaims, in a vivid passage (899)--her wounds no longer excite anger or indignation, but rather, a profound sense of melancholy resignation and dejection. She is left, near the conclusion, "so sad a creature, so sombre, so dark": "There could be nothing left for her but garments dark with woe, eyes red with weeping, hours sad from solitude, thoughts weary with memory" (926). Although

this bleak prognosis is slightly mitigated by Trevelyan's imminent death, Emily Trevelyan does assume an iconographic aspect akin to that of the "Mater Dolorosa" who weeps at the death of the "Man of Sorrows" in the literal sense that her final role is that of the grief-stricken mother.[12]

No simple, self-contained imagistic motif, the concatenation of sores and suffering, sorrow and sorriness in He Knew He Was Right provides the most intricate illustration of a corporal figure of melancholy that transcends the anatomical figure of Trevelyan himself. For in the case of the metaphor of the "wounded" melancholy body, it is the "one flesh" of a couple torn asunder that is finally at (the) stake in Trollope's novel.

5. The Melancholy Complex: Dynamics of Sadomasochism

From his earliest attempts at explaining neurotic states of melancholia, in 1895, to his well-known 1917 essay on the subject, Freud repeatedly employed the metaphor of an "open wound."[13] "The complex of melancholia," he states in the latter work, "behaves like an open wound, drawing to itself cathectic energies . . . from all directions, and emptying the ego until it is totally impoverished" (SE 14: 253). Extending the figure of the wound as it does, Freud's conception of melancholia as involving a form of ego conflict provides a useful theoretical framework through which to explore the perplexing and perverse relationship between mental and physical suffering manifest in the pathogenesis of Louis Trevelyan's melancholic disorder. What I am interested in pursuing here is the nature of the dynamic between the emotional suffering of the "inner self" that is prefigured by the

metaphor of the "wound," and the form of bodily sufferance that "wastes" Trevelyan's physical self. For although the doctor who finally diagnoses Trevelyan as "mono-maniacal" declares that "in his case the weakness of mind has been consequent upon the weakness of the body" (924), Trollope's text suggests that the reverse is the more likely scenario: that it is the "sore heart" that "make[s] the face thin, as well as fever or ague" (569).[14] And in this case, it is possible to read the signs of Trevelyan's "totally impoverished" physiology as the outward emblems of a wounded ego, torn between dialectical sadomasochistic tendencies.

The classical psychoanalytic theory of melancholia, or depression, in the modern term, is succinctly summarized by Kristeva in Black Sun. "Like mourning," melancholy "conceals an aggressiveness towards [a] lost object, thus revealing the ambivalence of the depressed person with respect to the object of mourning" (11). Freud elaborates on the preconditions and development of the disorder:

> In melancholia, the occasions which give rise to the illness extend for the most part beyond the clear case of a loss by death, and include all those situations of being slighted, neglected, or disappointed, which can import opposed feelings of love and hate into the relationship or reinforce an already existing ambivalence . . . . If the love for the object--a love which cannot be given up though the object itself is given up--takes refuge in narcissistic identification, then hate comes into the operation on this substitutive object, abusing it, debasing it, making it suffer and deriving sadistic satisfaction from its suffering. (SE 14: 251)

Trollope's novel presents us with a strikingly similar situation in that the "slighted" Trevelyan remains unwilling or unable to relinquish his attachment to Emily, despite the separation he initiates. His contending impulses to break from his wife and yet not break from her are clearly apparent, for example, in his employment of Bozzle, who,

while ostensibly charged with the task of finding "proof" for grounds of divorce, meanwhile supplies Trevelyan with a continual flow of information regarding the object of his obsession. Perhaps most tellingly of all, as the narrator is careful to point out, Trevelyan, for all his claims of scandal, never alters his will to disinherit his suspect spouse (743).[15]

Like Freud, Trollope stresses the nature of such self-tormenting ambivalence as a native element of the human constitution. "They who do not understand that a man may be brought to hope that which of all things is most grievous to him," the narrator interjects at one point, "have not observed with sufficient closeness the perversity of the human mind" (364). In this novel, "the perversity of the human mind" is indeed observed "with sufficient closeness" in respect to many characters, including Colonel Osborne, the good-hearted dowager Lady Millborough, and Emily herself.[16] What distinguishes Trevelyan's "perversity" from that of the others, Trollope shows, is mainly a matter of degree, the extremism "of the insane man, who loves to feed his grievance, even though the grievance should be his death" (364).

But the compulsive extent of Trevelyan's seemingly masochistic need to "feed his grievance" presupposes in itself another way in which his perversity differs from that of the other characters in the novel: his unique knack for eroticizing and fetishizing his own mental and physical suffering. For Trevelyan is the preeminent practitioner of an aesthetics of suffering which, at least for modern readers, seems fully inscribed in his very name, Travail-yen. This dimension of his pathology of course includes his self-image as the wounded "Man of Sorrows,"[17] but it is also more pervasively developed within the text in

relation to Trevelyan's distinctly "literary" orientation toward the genre of tragedy.[18] "The truth is that when one is absolutely unhappy one cannot revel in the imagination. I don't believe in the miseries of the poets," Trevelyan proclaims at one point (357). But "the truth is" that in consciously modelling himself upon the Othello prototype, the unhappy Trevelyan <u>does</u> tend to "revel" in the imagination, "in the idea of the tragedy he would make" (423).

A remarkable scenic interlude at Casalunga, on the occasion of a visit by Mr. Glascock, best illustrates Trevelyan's rather poetic prowess in carefully staging the affects of his melancholy suffering for maximal stage effect:

> [Trevelyan] walked out of the [patio] window and went down among the olive trees. He did not go far, however, but stood with his arm round the stem of one of them, playing with the shoots of a vine with his hand. Mr. Glascock followed him to the window and stood looking at him for a few minutes. But Trevelyan did not turn or move. He stood gazing at the pale, cloudless, heat-laden, motionless sky, thinking of his own sorrows, and remembering too, doubtless, with the vanity of a madman, that he was probably being watched in his reverie. (809)

Somehow adolescent in its knowing naivety, this picturesque pose of melancholy woe graphically underscores Trevelyan's self-conscious and sensual desire to heighten the pathos of his situation, and clearly bespeaks the melodramatic, if not strictly literary, sensibility that is gratified by his masochistic drives.

That Trevelyan's is likely no innocent pleasure in pain for art's sake alone, however, follows from Freud's basic contention in "Mourning and Melancholia":

> The self-tormenting in melancholia, which is without doubt enjoyable, signifies . . . a satisfaction of trends of sadism and hate which relate to an object, and which have been turned round upon the subject's own self . . . . In [melancholia] the patients usually still succeed, by the circuitous path of

> self-punishment, in taking revenge on the original object and in tormenting their loved one through their illness, having resorted to it in order to avoid the need to express their hostility to him openly. (SE 14: 251)

Within the text, Trollope most clearly affirms that Trevelyan's "masochistic" eroticization of suffering similarly masks a sadistic trend, which, through the "circuitous path of self-punishment," serves as a means of wreaking vengeance on Emily, at the moment of his protagonist's great "self-sacrifice." "If he gave up his child, and then died, died alone, without any friend near him, with no word of love in his ears, in [the] solitary and miserable abode" at Casalunga, so the train of Trevelyan's thought begins, then perhaps "the coals of fire would be hot upon [Emily's] head":

> He put out his thin wasted hands and looked at them, and touched the hollowness of his own cheeks, and coughed that he might hear the hacking sound of his own infirmity, and almost took glory in his weakness. It could not be long before the coals of fire would be heaped upon her head. (788)

Far from the magnanimous act of atonement that Trevelyan would have us believe it is, then, Trollope implies instead that his protagonist's "self-sacrifice" of Louis Jr. is but the most searing form of self-laceration by which he is able to "feed his grievance" and simultaneously heap retribution upon the wife he loves to hate, or hates to love. And appropriately, perhaps, Trevelyan's avenging vision of Emily carrying her burnt offerings upon her head in penitence draws as much on the traditional semiology of melancholy as it does on scriptural iconography.[19]

Almost greedily anticipating his death for the woe it will "heap" on Emily, and caressing, now, not an olive branch, but the contours of his own suffering body, Trevelyan, the narrator states, "pitied himself

with a pity that was feminine" (787). The essence of the above scene's erotic appeal, the womanly tenderness with which Trevelyan stokes the flames of his own bodily sufferance, also points toward the sort of "narcissistic identification" with the "lost object" posited by Freud. The "feminine" attributes that the once-"manly" Trevelyan now takes on, that is, suggest how, in the melancholy complex, the "lost object" or other is internalized and reconstituted within the ego of the self, the self which is in turn punished as a "substitutive object" of that other. What Trevelyan's perversity seems to entail in this respect is "a whole complex dialectic of idealization and devalorization of self and other," a "seesawing between . . . the projection on the self of hatred against the other, and vice versa, the turning against the other of self-depreciation" (Kristeva, Black Sun 11, 196).[20] Such is the nature of the physical conflict which leaves the Freudian ego "totally impoverished," sapping its vitality like an "open wound." And such, too, I am suggesting, best approximates the vicissitudes of inner turmoil that, in the case of Trollope's protagonist, are made outwardly manifest in a form of melancholic consumption of the whole body.

Inasmuch as he comes to perceive his death as the ultimate form of revenge, the suicidal implications of Trevelyan's sadomasochistic "glory in his weakness" also come to the fore. For while, on the one hand, it is true that his physical deterioration is portrayed as a genuinely organic affliction beyond his control, Trevelyan's voluptuous awareness that his "weakness" may constitute his most effective weapon also leads him to cultivate that "weakness" in a patently self-destructive manner, whether by drinking to excess, or "half-mind[edly]" exacerbating his condition by overexerting himself and letting "the night air come upon

him" (791). That Trevelyan has been "wasted by the kind of life which he had led" is the opinion voiced by Dr. Nevill near the end (900), but the narrator drops his own ominous hint somewhat earlier, when he describes Trevelyan's condition as such "that the happiness and welfare of no human being--not even his own--could safely be entrusted to his keeping" (786). And to the extent that it can be regarded as a form of slow suicide, the decline and death of Trevelyan entail a more subtle homicidal significance as well, through the same "circuitous path" of self-punishment as outlined above. In the case of the melancholic complex, as Kristeva writes, "putting oneself to death [is] but a tragic disguise for massacring an Other" (Black Sun 11).[21]

Finally, whether Trevelyan may accurately be said to "resort" to his illness, in Freud's term, or not, it is clear that his bodily suffering does indeed serve a functional communicatory purpose of the sort outlined by psychoanalytic theory. In effect, Trevelyan's manifest body melancholy is his most eloquent accusation. "I am ill;--very ill! Look at me. See what she has brought me to!" (736, emphasis added). To the degree that Trevelyan's suffering body succeeds, as we have seen, in acting as a solvent on Emily's conscience, his illness serves effectively though indirectly to convey a "hostility" which he is unable to "express . . . openly," to recall Freud's words. For Trevelyan represses, to the very end, any direct verbalization of that debased suspicion which he "would . . . have rather cut his tongue out before he would have expressed to anyone" (364). That his wife is an adulterous "harlot" is a conviction he hints at through allusion and innuendo, but ultimately leaves for Emily herself to articulate (927). Against "words which seem to convey accusation" Emily can always find the strength to

"protest" (921). But the mute rebuke of her husband's pathetically wasted body, by appealing, presumably, to her "feminine" sense of pity, chastises Emily in spite of her knowledge of her essential innocence. It induces in the once-proud wife an unprecedented measure of humility and remorse, a self-abjection more painful, for the reader, than Trevelyan's own abject condition.

6. Melancholy and Modalities of Representation

That the weak, wizened body often prevails where words fail points up the interplay of distinct semiotic modalities in Trollope's anatomy of melancholy. The corporal symptoms of Trevelyan's malady are, indeed, shown to be inextricably related to linguistic phenomena through what appears, in Trollope's text, as a sort of sliding scale of signification: a representational continuum perhaps most helpfully approached in the context of Julia Kristeva's concept of le sémiotique. The basic distinction drawn by Kristeva is between a symbolic realm of signification, a realm of "grammar and the logic of discourse," and a semiotic order encompassing primary processes, "drives and their articulation" (Black Sun 264-65). "Her semiotic," explains Shuli Barzilai, is a "drive-affected dimension of human experience" at "the borders of language" that "disrupts (even as it interfuses with) the symbolic"; "it involves dynamic, pre-linguistic operations rather than thetic or static modes of articulation" (297). At the outer limits of the Kristeva semiotic, and "irreducible to verbal or semiological expression" remains the enigmatic sphere of affects, those inexpressible experiences or moods of fear, joy, or (especially) sadness, whose precise status has not, as yet, been determined. Kristeva conceives of

affect as an "archaic energy signal," the most "rudimentary" form of representation, and stresses in her definition of the term the "twofold aspect" of affect as both "energy flow and psychic inscription" (Black Sun 21, 178).[22] "Sadness (like all affect)," she writes, "is the psychic inscription of energy displacements caused by external or internal traumas" (Black Sun 21).

Trollope's interest in modalities of representation that approximate Kristeva's schema is generally apparent in his novel's concerns with the physiology of speech: a phenomenon seen to entail a symbolic realm of "Hard Words" (ch. 10) that recedes metaphorically to the pre-linguistic level of a bodily event, and beyond, to the least hypostatized trace of the sign in the physical energy traces of speech. For in He Knew He Was Right, the "grammar and the logic of discourse" are everywhere figuratively represented as a form of physical altercation linked to more primal, preverbal instincts of aggression. There is indeed a "dreadful substantiality" and "relentlessness" about the uttered word within the text (R. McMaster 201, 198), and nowhere is the capacity to wield words as weapons of bodily assault more marked than in the progress of the Trevelyans' quarrel. Just as it is Emily's condescending language that "wounds" Trevelyan to the "inner self" (634), so Trevelyan himself is depicted as "hurling" hard words (592), like rocks, on the retaliatory basis that "she had hit him hard, and should he not hit her again?" (261).

By choosing metaphors of the brute force of "hard words," whether as a "broadside" shot "fired" (454) or a provoking jab "throw[n] in the teeth" (927), Trollope represents symbolic wounds as entities sustained and inflicted at the proprioceptive semiotic level of the body. But he

also evinces thereby a sharp authorial awareness of the physics of speech as a form of energy displacement. That speech, which "cannot be recalled" once unleashed from the tongue, as the narrator pointedly reminds us (7), is endowed with a vital quantum force of its own is made ironically apparent from the moment readers find Trevelyan in the midst of writing a "scientific article," "intent on raising a dispute with some learned pundit about the waves of sound" (12).[23] Interrupted by the "waves of sound" raised in consequence of Trevelyan's first angry words, this article, presumably, remains unfinished. Trollope's early evocation of the image of sound waves thus carries a thematic relevance in relation to the repercussions of passional speech, but it is also intriguing from a semiotic perspective. For such imperceptible "waves" are like "the representations proper to affects," in that they appear as "a modality of significance" at "the threshold of bio-energetic equilibria," as "fluctuating energy traces" that, in themselves, are "insufficiently stabilized to coagulate into signs" (Kristeva, "Melancholy Imaginary" 108). At the same time that they obviously refer the reader to a symbolic realm of verbal signification, "waves of sound" also suggest an order of significance, which, in its nature as an energy flow, reaches beyond the dimension of the sign <u>per se</u>, approaching Kristeva's notion of affect. For as an image of the physical or material inscription of energy displacements in speech, "waves of sound" present a sort of externalized analogue or translation of the idea of a "psychic inscription of energy displacements," of those fluctuating "waves" of an unrepresentable affect.

The dynamics of various parameters of representation during the experience of melancholy is a subject pursued at length by Kristeva in

Black Sun.[24] In depressive individuals, she argues, "the surge of affect and primary semiotic processes comes into conflict with the linguistic armor (which I have called alien or secondary), as well as with symbolic constructs (apprenticeships, ideologies, beliefs)" (Black Sun 64-65). Because Louis Trevelyan's malady never progresses to the point of complete asymbolia, it would be inaccurate to suggest that the manifestations of his melancholy signal precisely the sort of "spectacular collapse of meaning" or wholesale "neutralization of the signifier" that Kristeva identifies as characteristic of the "dead language" of the profoundly disturbed depressive (Black Sun 53, 20). Nonetheless, the pathogenesis of Trevelyan's melancholy in Trollope's text, as I hope to show, does appear to involve a conflict similar in nature, if not degree: a progressive disjunction between, on the one hand, Trevelyan's symbolic and linguistic constructs, and, on the other, a preverbal semiotic modality associable to his black mood.[25]

The disruption of the symbolic realm in He Knew He Was Right is evident through Trollope's careful portrayal of Trevelyan's growing alienation from his own speech. This facet of his disorder is initially marked as a slight perversity, as Trevelyan's ear becomes inured to the abrasive modulations of "hard words." Not only does he come to "hardly recogniz[e] the force of the language which he used," but "every harsh word" that his letters to Emily contain becomes "in some sort, pleasant to his ear" (257, 261). Trevelyan's increasing inability to gauge the "force" of his language indicates a measure of symbolic disassociation which becomes more pronounced upon his withdrawal to Casalunga. There, he assumes rhetorical positions or "attitudes" of verbal address as highly stylized and artificial as any that he adopts in bodily posture.

But in contrast to those manifestly melancholic corporal "attitudes" he strikes, the verbal roles he adopts are recurrently presented as "attempt[s] at joviality" or "high-flown spirit," which, ironically, only serve to better underscore the man's genuine despair (805, 871). Trevelyan's "affected air of ease and [his] would-be cynicism" (868) are "painful" to those who witness it, as the narrator notes:

> This attempt at satire, so fatuous, so plain, so false, together with the would-be jaunty manner of the speaker, who, however, failed repeatedly in his utterances from sheer physical exhaustion, was excessively painful to Stanbury. (870)

The dislocation between the intended style and import of Trevelyan's speech and its actual tormented delivery creates a "painful" effect similar to that of the speech of the depressive patients described by Kristeva, the meaning of whose words, she observes, typically "seems secondary, frozen, somewhat removed from the head and body of the person who is speaking": it is a sort of "artificial, unbelievable language, cut out of the painful background that is not accessible to any signifier and that intonation alone, intermittently, succeeds in inflecting" (Black Sun 43, 44). Like the "gaudy" Italian style of dress he drapes over his feeble frame (873), the pseudo-stoical style of address Trevelyan assumes is glaringly foreign, ex-centric to himself. And in the schism thus opened between the speaking being and his speech, one perceives something akin to that "speech of the depressed" which is like "an alien skin"--for "melancholy persons are foreigners in their maternal tongue" (Kristeva, Black Sun 53).

Not only do other characters remain unconvinced by the artificial language Trevelyan comes to speak, deeming him "not responsible for his expressions" (806), but the narrator also suggests a more serious

symbolic breakdown when he intimates that Trevelyan himself fails to believe in the words he speaks. Drawn compulsively toward "elements of fiction and game-playing" in his discourse, Trollope's protagonist comes to "speak at a level of parareality at odds with [his] authentic beliefs and feelings," as Rowland McMaster suggests (197, 202). Indeed, the ever-escalating incongruity between Trevelyan's inner thoughts and his verbal expressions is an aspect of his mental pathology that the narrator does not fail to drive home. "In the sorrows which had come upon him in his unsuccessful struggle" with Emily, as he comments of Louis at one point, "his mind had wavered so frequently, that his spoken words were no true indicators of his thoughts; and in all his arguments, he failed to express either his convictions or his desires" (743). The precise nature of the "conviction" Trevelyan fails to express is later elaborated by the narrator. Though Trevelyan "considered himself to have been so injured by the world, to have been the victim of so cruel a conspiracy,"

> through it all, there was something approaching to a conviction that he had brought his misery upon himself by being unlike to other men . . . . When he was alone his reflections concerning his wife were much juster than were his words when he spoke either with her, or to others, of her conduct. (786-87)

In other words, at some deep level of his being, the husband of He Knew He Was Right knows he is wrong, and, as the narrator writes, "acknowledged to himself that [Emily's] conduct had been the result of his own moody temperament" (787).

Trevelyan may sense that he is, in the final analysis,at fault in his marital dispute, but as the narrator observes:

> He could not say that he had been wrong. He could not even think that he had been wrong as to the cause of the great

> quarrel. He was one so miserable and so unfortunate--so he thought--that even in doing right he had fallen into perdition. (787)

On the one hand, Trevelyan's inability to express or even to "think that he had been wrong" in the face of a simultaneous "conviction" that, nevertheless, he has somehow erred, may be simply attributed to the force of insane obstinacy. But in another sense, if Trevelyan cannot verbalize, or even mentally represent to himself, the essence of his contradictory "conviction" of his wrongfulness, it is perhaps because that "conviction" is not something that he intellectually knows, but rather, something that he simply feels, like a mood, at the more inexplicable semiotic level of drives and instincts, as a sort of bodily intuition within his gut. That is to say, the "unheard of contradiction" Trevelyan senses within himself may be a knowledge of guilt experienced at the more archaic cognitive level of a "preverbal self-sensuality" (Kristeva, Black Sun 205): as a form of knowledge that "approaches" but does not quite attain the level of articulate signification, and more properly belongs to the semiotic sphere of the body.

At any rate, to the extent that Trevelyan is, at bottom, unbelieving in the worst calumny he speaks against Emily, his mental alienation reflects an element of the "empty speech" characteristic of melancholics. "Empty speech," in Kristeva's sense of the term, refers to signifiers which, "while they have a signification in themselves, . . . are experienced by the subject as empty . . . because they are not bound to semiotic imprints (drive-related representatives and affect representations)" (Black Sun 52). Trevelyan's "hard words" against Emily, conflicting with his "much juster" unstated estimates of her

conduct, are likewise "empty" words which he speaks, but does not in truth believe, belying as they do the "semiotic imprint" of his innermost sense of Emily's essential innocence. Kristeva contends that when the "archaic psychic inscriptions" of the semiotic and affective realms are thus divorced from speech, "they give rise to acting out, which replaces language in depressive persons" (Black Sun 52).

The substantial degree to which representational modes of "acting out" come to supplement, if not entirely "replace," language for Trollope's melancholy man, is manifest by his increasingly frequent recourse to "expressive" bodily postures, as well as by his progressively marked lapses into "motionless" and "speechless" states of "half-dreaming . . . vacancy" (786, 881). But Trollope reserves the most climactic instance of such body language for the penultimate scene of Trevelyan's "Acquitt[al]" of Emily (ch. 98). "Can you say one word for your wife, dear, dear, dearest husband?" Emily begins, and the dying Trevelyan responds:

> 'What word?'
> 'I have not been a harlot to you;--have I?'
> 'What name is that?'
> 'But what a thing, Louis! Kiss my hand, Louis, if you believe me.' And very gently she laid the tips of her fingers on his lips. For a moment or two she waited, and the kiss did not come. Would he spare her in this the last moment left to him either for justice or for mercy? For a moment or two the bitterness of her despair was almost unendurable . . . . But at length the lips moved, and with struggling ear she could hear the sound of the tongue within, and the verdict of the dying man had been given in her favour. He never spoke a word more either to annul it or enforce it. (927)

What is the status of the "verdict" thus given? The narrator's comment that "[Trevelyan] never spoke a word more either to annul it or enforce it" suggests that Louis has summoned the strength to articulate a faintly audible verbal rejoinder. But the nature of Trevelyan's

acquittal is inherently ambiguous. What Emily finally requests of Trevelyan is, after all, not a word, but the gesture of a kiss. And it is in the form of a kiss that the narrator subsequently characterizes Trevelyan's deathbed "reparation": "With that slight touch of his dry fevered lips he had made the assertion on which was to depend the future peace and comfort of the woman whom he had so cruelly misused" (928). Trollope thus unsettles our certainty as to whether "the sound" formed by "the tongue within" actually amounts to anything more than the inarticulate raspings of the "slight touch" of a kiss; whether any "real" word in fact escapes those "dry fevered lips," never mind the ones Emily "almost" deludes herself into believing she has heard, after the fact (928).[26]

Left wavering equivocally somewhere between the sound of speech and that of the touch of lip and tongue to flesh, the gesture that constitutes Trevelyan's ultimate pledge of faith in Emily aptly consolidates the trend of symbolic alienation and impairment that attends his melancholy decline. For although it must also be understood in the context of an expiration of physical strength, Trevelyan's struggle to symbolize that "one word" Emily initially requests presents a concrete narrative instance of a representation that, rather like the "fluctuating energy traces" of melancholy affect, is in itself "insufficiently stabilized to coagulate" into a sign, to re-echo Kristeva. Suggesting as it does both a signal kiss and a linguistic signifier, the scene of acquittal "acts out" the final extent of a melancholic regression from the order of language to a "discursive strateg[y] working at the intersection of affective and linguistic

inscriptions, at the intersection of the semiotic and the symbolic" (Kristeva, Black Sun 52-53).

Poised ultimately at the threshold of linguistic and corporal modalities of representation, Trevelyan's malady precludes the most extreme fate of the melancholic, the total asymbolia of a wholly blank and mute meaninglessness. But the clinical culmination of melancholia in complete asymbolia is nevertheless worth a final pause in relation to the body melancholy which this chapter has explored. "To transpose," Kristeva notes, "corresponds to the Greek metaphorein, to transport; language is, from the start, a translation" (Black Sun 41). In melancholy disorders, it is this native gift of translatability, this rhetorical capacity for metaphor, which is steadily diminished, and, in the worst instances, entirely abolished. "Melancholia then ends up in asymbolia, in loss of meaning," Kristeva emphasizes, "if I am no longer capable of translating or metaphorizing, I become silent and I die" (Black Sun 42). In other words, metaphor and metonymy, the two active principles of the substitution and replacement of terms, begin to falter with the death of desire and energy in melancholia, and end where melancholy reigns absolute. Or to put it yet another way, severe melancholic disorder points to the opposite extreme of that "madness of rhetoric" manifest in literary texts such as "Love and Freindship"--a "madness" which, as we saw, was marked by the loco-motion of an "ungovernable linguistic play, through which meaning misfires" (Felman, WM 252). For as opposed to the rapid, transformative displacements and transpositions of signifiers characterizing the madness of Jane Austen's prose, melancholia might be described as a state of signifying

paralysis, a condition of moribund stasis which radically undermines the possibility of either firing or misfiring meaning at all.

This semiotic phenomenon casts, perhaps, a new relevance on the rich metaphoricity of the melancholy body in literary representations and psychoanalytic discourse. For it may suggest that the creative forces giving rise to the literature of melancholy impart to it a certain therapeutic potential, a potential perceived, in fact, by writers from Burton to Kristeva herself. Burton, who compares himself to a physician bleeding melancholy readers of their ill humors, quite clearly conceives of his anatomical exercise as a form of antidote (104). More recently, Kristeva has referred to creative art as an "antidepressant" whose "triumph over melancholy" consists in its ability to transpose and "stage[e]" affects through the "construction of a symbolic object" ("Melancholy Imaginary" 116). Psychoanalysis, figuratively presented in Black Sun as helping to effect a sort of symbolic skin graft by which melancholics can reclaim the "alien skin" of their native tongue (52-53), is similarly upheld as a "counterdepressant" by her (1-32).[27]

Even as it reproduces the melancholy body, then, the language of literature and psychoanalysis in some sense attests to the power of translation and rhetoric--the power to generate or construct meanings (as well as madness). This capacity precludes the silent hopelessness of the subjective melancholic position itself. In this respect, to attempt the representation of melancholy is, perhaps, always implicitly to resist or counter "the symbolic abdication that is germane to depression" (Kristeva, Black Sun 40). Writing about melancholy, as Kristeva contends, "causes the affect to slip into the effect": "at the

boundaries of emotion and action, writing comes into being only through the moment of the negation of the [melancholy] affect so that the effectiveness of signs might be born" (Black Sun 217). And to this extent, Trollope's literary creation, too, can be seen to constitute not only a "faithful semiological representation of the [melancholy] subject's battle with symbolic collapse," but also a kind of "therapeutic device" which "possesses a real and imaginary effectiveness" (Kristeva, Black Sun 24). In He Knew He Was Right, Trollope simultaneously writes about the melancholy body and against it. Contra the body of melancholy stands the textual body: a body translated against the very grain of the silent black humor it so deftly anatomizes, against a pain so numbingly profound that it subsumes and exhausts even the smallest possibilities of metaphor.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SUFFOCATION OF THE MOTHER:

HYSTERIA AND HEART AND SCIENCE

Does the left brain know what the left hand
is doing? can intellect and womb
be connected, heart/body/mind on the same axis
and which language do you hear me in?

- Jennifer Boire, "The Tongue as Mother," 1991

Heart and Science, Wilkie Collins's 1883 novel of labors in love and the laboratory, bills itself prominently as "A Story of the Present Time."[1] In the preface, the author underscores both the essential veracity and currency of his scientific information. And indeed, in creating the sinister vivisectionist, Dr Benjulia, to focus upon the "delicate ground" (9) of experimental neurophysiology, even Collins was, no doubt, unaware of the extent to which he was addressing issues at the very cutting edge, so to speak, of contemporary Darwinian science. Only a year prior to the publication of Heart and Science, for example, J. M. Charcot, the renowned "Napoleon of Neurosis" at the Salpêtrière hospital in Paris, prophesied that the race for a definitive theory of cerebral localization had "just entered a new phase," and was "attracting general attention abroad as well as in France" (Lectures on Localization 4). That it was certainly doing in England, where in 1881 the International Medical Congress in London had refuelled the controversy over vivisection by featuring startling new demonstrations of cerebral experimentation on animals.[2] And theories of cerebral anatomy were not the only ones in the making at this time. After all, in the early 1880s, one still-obscure "brain and nerve" specialist (105) who was

dividing time between his own private matters of "Heart and Science"--love letters to his fiancee and lab experiments on the reproductive glands of eels, no less--was Sigmund Freud. Rather remarkably, a dim sense of something akin to Freud's achievement over the next few decades is conveyed in Collins's novel through its depiction of an anonymous brain doctor, whose work on cerebral disease eventually saves the heroine and drives the intensely competitive Benjulia to distraction. For it is a revolutionary scientific achievement that Collins imagines: one destined to rank its discoverer "among the greatest physicians of our time" (220). In this respect, it is perhaps particularly gratifying to imagine the founder of psychoanalysis as the nameless nemesis of Benjulia, "the big doctor" who literally walks softly and carries a "big stick" wherever he goes (100, 372).

Yet for all its intentional and coincidental claims to scientific currency, Heart and Science has been repeatedly criticized on grounds of its technical superficiality. The author, as Kenneth Robinson maintains, has merely "sprinkl[ed] his pages with the current jargon of science": "There is no awareness of the rapidly widening horizons of scientific discovery, only a spurious air of topicality."[3] To the extent that the scientifically topical does indeed remain the merely topographical in Heart and Science, assessments such as Robinson's appear warranted. However, as I wish to suggest here, both Collins and his critics have done the text--and themselves--a great disservice by focusing exclusively upon its current context. For if there is no profound awareness of the scientific present in the novel, there is, as with Trollope's representation of melancholia in He Knew He Was Right, a fascinating awareness of the medical and mythical past: a depth and

richness of historical allusiveness which is nowhere better illustrated than in this text's conceptual construction of hysteria.

Indeed, as a story about the "brains and nerves" of "excitable women" of "the Present Time," Heart and Science actually embodies a heuristic model of hysteria which harks back to the semantic origins of the disease in ancient theories of uterine displacement, as much as it echoes major tenets of contemporary Darwinian psychophysiology. Once again, the literary embodiment of pathology can be seen to reflect the composite strata of "various levels of historical consciousness" (Gilman 9). A continuum spanning backwards in time from Charcot to Plato, as it were, hysteria more particularly discloses itself within Collins's text as a historical construct roughly analogous to three distinct organs of the female anatomy: the brain, the heart, and the womb. Only most explicitly a modern cerebral concept, the idea of hysteria finds its most potent expression in the text, not where it is technically described by men of science, but in silent spaces of gesture and image--and most importantly, in an image of the very act of rendering the female inarticulate: in a classical "root metaphor"[4] of hysteria as "the Suffocation of the Mother." While this governing model of 'the mother,' or womb, is not without its problems from a feminist perspective, I will argue that, ultimately, it can be regarded as one of the more provocative and promising aspects of this difficult and uneven novel, this "best-of-the-worst" middle child of Collinsian genius, this often praised but more often damned Heart and Science.

Hysteria has a long and notorious history as a most elusive and protean disorder. The late-nineteenth-century neurologist Weir Mitchell once referred to it as "the nosological limbo of all unnamed female

maladies," adding that it "might just as well be called 'mysteria.'"[5] In Collins's novel, this opinion is seconded by the morose Dr Benjulia, who wryly recounts of a past case: "We called it hysteria, not knowing what else it was" (109). In Heart and Science, a novel replete with "excitable" women, what is "called" hysteria ranges dramatically from vague varieties of "excessive nervous sensibility" (551) to a highly specific form of "Brain disease" (502). It is with this most narrowly clinical manifestation of a "nervous hysteria" (396) in the cerebral sphere that I would like to begin. It occurs at the climax of the novel, when Collins's heroine, Carmina Graywell, an orphaned heiress, is suddenly "hysterically affected by [the] serious moral shock" of being disowned as an illegitimate "bastard" by her nefarious aunt and legal guardian, Mrs Galilee (502). In the uncommon "affection of the brain" (447) that ensues, the heroine's "complicated hysterical disturbance" is said to include symptoms such as "partial catalepsy" (393), "simulated paralysis" (482), severe vomiting, and amnesia (428-29). Just as the malady threatens to become fatal, however, the hero, a physician who has been restoring his own "shattered nerves" (125) in the tonic "wilds of Canada" (414), returns, bearing the secret of the unnamed physician's revolutionary new treatment for brain disease. Within "ten days time," Collins writes, "there [is] a happy end to the suspense": "Carmina's life was safe" (504).

In some respects, the description of clinical hysteria offered by the text accurately reflects fundamental principles of contemporary psychiatric thought. Benjulia's conviction, for instance, that "a violent moral shock sometimes has a serious effect on the brain--especially if it is the brain of an excitable woman" (328) is a fairly

sound reflection of the physiological bent of Darwinian psychiatrists such as Henry Maudsley, who postulated a direct correlation between mental emotion and cerebral commotion "at the molecular level." Insofar as "emotio mentis" equalled "commotio cerebri," "strong moral shocks" could indeed be seen to trigger brainstorms which might issue in potentially grave organic disorders (Body and Will 111, 77). And Carmina's dramatic symptoms, too, represent a plausible repertoire of the types of hysterical conversion symptoms being studied at the time by prominent theorists of the disease, such as Charcot, Freud, and Josef Breuer.

Nevertheless, it is apparent that the concept of hysteria in Heart and Science remains most unsatisfyingly sterile and shallow precisely at the point at which it is generated by the most technical vocabulary. For in merely conflating his heroine's case of "nervous hysteria" with a medicinally treatable case of organic "brain disease," Collins largely precludes the possibility of gaining any real psychological insight into Carmina's condition. Nor, as readers will have correctly surmised by now, is the author applying any valid principle of the theory of cerebral localization. Rather, much as medieval artists often visualized and concretized the invisible, amorphous forces of madness as a proverbial "stone of folly" which could be neatly excised from the forehead, like a tumorous growth,[6] so Collins seems to seize upon the reassuring possibility of the organic localization of hysterical disorder as a potential answer to the vexed "mysterias" of psychosomatic pathology.

At a second, semi-explicit level in the text, however, hysteria also manifests itself according to a more generalized and dated

stereotype of the word as a virtual synonym for "all extremes of emotionality" (Showalter 129). In this context it unfolds as a drama of uncontrolled female passions: "mysterias," now, of the heart. For it seems as though at least one of the "excitable women" in this novel is always "on the verge of hysterics" (376)--or yet more extreme behavior. Throughout the narrative, for instance, Carmina is also subject to lesser hysterical afflictions, which include fits of fainting, oppressed breathing (241), "loud and wild" laughter, and violent and histrionic gesticulations (377). The heroine's rival, the governess, Miss Minerva, is an "ill-tempered" (343), "neuralg[ic]" (347) woman, whose "self-tormenting nature" (311) expresses itself repeatedly in fits of "mad" jealousy (212). And Carmina's faithful nurse, an old woman of "an excitable Italian nature" (432) at one point attacks Mrs Galilee in a frenzy of rage before commencing with a splendid display of breast-beating, maenadic despair (386-87), much as Benjulia's pretty young cook, also a woman with "excitable brains," boils over into a knife-wielding "rage" when provoked by her creepy employer (320, 327). Even the "intellectual" Mrs Galilee succumbs in the end to a temporary but full-blown mania: a "violent madness" à la Bertha Mason, during which she is also confined in an upstairs room, and flies at her husband with "a shriek of fury" when he attempts to see her (477, 487).

Clearly portrayed as mad and hysterical victims of their own ungovernable passions, Collins's women reveal themselves as essentially creatures of the "heart," beings defined against both the uncannily dispassionate Dr Benjulia, the representative of a hyper-rational realm of modern "science," and against the hero, Ovid Vere, who as both a humanistic physician and a man in love is intended to embody the novel's

normative ideal of "Heart in Science." Pedestrian though it is, the conventional structural schema of the novel yet effectively underscores the merely superficial or topographical nature of Collins's identification of the brain as the primary site of female pathology. That, in Collins's work, the well-being of woman is at least penultimately dependent on the state of the heart and not of the head is, perhaps, most succinctly illustrated by Benjulia's poor overwrought cook, who at one point is described as quite literally "sa[ving]" her "brain" by "crying her heart out" (328-29).

To trace the construct of hysteria to its most primitive and inarticulate roots at the metaphoric center of the novel, however, involves a final descent from the cerebral and emotive zones of woman to the generative matrix of the womb. The notion of hysteria as a disease of the migratory womb extends, of course, even beyond the ancient Greeks who christened the disorder after the uterus, to the earliest recorded sources of Egyptian medicine. The thinking behind the uterine causation theory--that the hysterical sensation of choking or "globus hystericus" is caused by the rising womb--is well described by Hippocrates and Aretaeus amongst others, but as historian Ilza Veith suggests, the concept finds "its most graphic expression" in Plato's Timaeus. Here, the womb is described as "an animal" capable of "straying about the body and cutting off the passages of the breath, . . . imped[ing] respiration and bring[ing] the sufferer into the extremest anguish."[7] In England, the notion of the mobile matrix was perhaps most influentially propagated by Edward Jorden's popular treatise of 1603, A Briefe Discourse of a Disease Called the Suffocation of the Mother. Writing primarily to disabuse "simple and unlearned people" of the lingering

superstition of the hysteric as a witch (1), Jorden informs his readers that

> [t]his disease is called by diverse names amongst our authors, Passio hysterica, Suffocatio, Praefocatio, and Strangulatus Uteri . . . &c. In English the Mother, or the Suffocation of the Mother, because it takes them with choaking in the throat: and it is an affect of the Mother or wombe wherein the principal parts of the bodie by consent do suffer. (5)

But what of the 'rising of the Mother' in Heart and Science? Significantly, Collins's text first calls attention to the phenomenon of the hysterical "globus" after Mrs Galilee pointedly refers to herself as Carmina's "second mother." "Yes, she really did say that," the heroine fumes: "Whether I was only angry, or whether I was getting hysterical I don't know. I began to feel an oppression in my breathing that almost choked me" (241). In a later instance, it is Mrs Galilee, the "second mother" herself, who is subject to such a fit, when she discovers a letter written by Carmina to Ovid, complaining of "his mother's cold-blooded cruelty" (385) toward her. In the "fury of her anger," "gasp[ing] for breath and speech," Mrs Galilee tears "open the fastening of her dress at the throat, to get breath," to loose the words which are to affect the heroine so dreadfully: "You impudent bastard!" (384-85). It is at this dramatic moment of the novel's climactic scene that the root metaphor of the "Suffocation of the Mother" is strikingly realized as a form of visual equivalent of a verbal trope:

> The door opened as those horrible words passed her lips. The nurse . . . entered the room . . . . The demon in [Mrs Galilee] urged her on; she attempted to reiterate the detestable falsehood. Her first word died away in silence. The lean brown fingers of the Italian woman had her by the throat--held her as the claws of a tigress might have held her. Her eyes rolled in the mute agony of an appeal for help. In vain! In vain! . . . [T]he nurse tightened her hold in a last merciless grasp; dashed the insensible woman on the floor; and, turning back, fell on her knees at her darling's feet. (386)

Insofar as this scene of "strangulatus uteri" represents a corporal and literal enactment of a figurative or metaphoric conceit, it can be provocatively interpreted from the vantage points of both dramatic and psychoanalytic semiology. As a convention of stage melodrama, that is, one can think of it in terms of a "scenic realization of a verbal cliché."[8] But as a caricature of hysterical symptomology itself, it can also be viewed as analogous to the "mechanism of symbolization" which Breuer and Freud noted in conversion symptoms. In the collaborative Studies on Hysteria, Freud discusses "the genesis of hysterical symptoms" as a semiotic event often based precisely upon popular "figure[s] of speech": "In taking a verbal expression literally and in feeling the 'stab in the heart' or the 'slap in the face' after some slighting remark as a real event," he avers, "the hysteric is not taking liberties with words, but is simply reviving once more the sensations to which the verbal expression owes its justification" (SE 2: 179, 181). "What could be more probable," Freud asks, "than that . . . figure[s] of speech . . . did in fact originate from the innervatory sensations" of the body?

> These may now for the most part have become so much weakened that the expression of them in words seems to us only to be a figurative picture of them, whereas in all probability the description was once meant literally; and hysteria is right in restoring the original meaning of the words in depicting its unusually strong innervations. (SE 2: 181)

Granted, the rhetoric of the image at the center of the text can be postulated only as a hypothesis. Granted, too, we are dealing here with a so-called "linguistic dead figure" (Amossy 50)--with an archaism as opposed to the "current jargon" of science which denotes the cerebral model of hysteria. Yet Collins's text works in a variety of respects to

enable readers to recognize and reconstitute the metaphor of the "suffocation of the mother." For one thing, Collins provides subtle intratextual clues to jog the collective memory, not only drawing prior links between the word "mother" and the sensation of choking, but also piquantly enhancing the actual scene of the suffocation by having the woman who does the stifling, the nurse Teresa, named after the patron saint of hysteria.[9] And while it is unlikely that any of Collins's readers would have been familiar with Jorden's A Briefe Discourse, they may well have encountered the metaphor of the mother through such well-known Renaissance works as Robert Burton's The Anatomy of Melancholy (1621), which describes a "melancholic vapour" of "nuns, maids, and widows" which is "difficult to distinguish" from "uterine suffocation, like fits of the mother" (354). Similarly, King Lear (1628), to which Collins's novel once alludes, contains Lear's memorable lines: "O, how this mother swells up toward my heart! / Hysterica Passio! down, thou climbing sorrow! Thy element's below" (2.4.56-58).

Even if it was not fully verbalized, Collins's visual metaphor would have likely registered in readers' minds at some semi- or unconscious level. For as Dianne Hunter has suggested, "hysteria as a system of gestures" is based upon and perpetuates an enormously powerful iconic and mythopoetic tradition that "seems to invite spectacular treatment" (113, n. 3). And if the hysterical womb should, ultimately, function as the silent synecdoche of the female in Collins's text, it perhaps only reflects a more fundamental cliché of femininity similarly internalized by the Victorians, who, even in an era of modern science, could still marvel of the female body that it was "as if the Almighty,

in creating the female Sex, had taken the uterus and built up a woman around it."[10]

Whether consciously or unconsciously received by his readers, the root metaphor of the hysterical mother informs the novel's wider themes in important ways.[11] Indeed, insofar as the main plot is based upon an allegation of female adultery, the entire text hinges ironically upon the concept of a "wandering womb." Given that readers have repeatedly commented upon the incidental nature of the vivisection theme, it is, in fact, surprising that they have paid so little attention to the specifically female story that unfolds in Heart and Science. Yet another of Wilkie Collins's "mother-daughter" novels (Leavy Fass 141), Heart and Science also manifests itself more specifically as a fictive affirmation and elaboration of Monique David-Ménard's recent assertion that "the essence of hysteria is played out in the traumatic relation to the maternal" (14). For this is indeed a novel centrally and literally concerned with "displacements of the mother." After the heroine's natural mother is displaced by death, for instance, she relies upon Teresa, her good nurse, "to fill the place of a mother" (340) and help defend her against the machinations of her other "second mother" (25, 48), her wicked Aunt Galilee; both of whom are in turn displaced when the heroine ultimately marries and bears an "infant daughter" of her own (535). With a ripple-like effect, this process is also duplicated with the daughters of Mrs Galilee, Zo and Maria, because when their mother goes mad, she is displaced by a "second mother" in the form of their aunt, Lady Northlake (479). It is through its implicit inscription in such patterns of maternal displacement that the concept of hysteria in Heart and Science taps its most fertile mythopoetic roots in the

Demeter-Persephone legend: a myth which some modern analysts interpret as the archetypal tale of the patriarchal disruption of a pre-oedipal symbiosis between mother and daughter.[12] Hence, like Persephone, Collins's heroine clearly expresses a yearning for a return to an earlier maternal world when she dreams of her "good mother" (344) as [she] used to see her in the nursery at bedtime": "She stooped over me and kissed me," Carmina recounts, "[and] I wasn't surprised or frightened; I put my arms round her neck; and we floated away together" (343). An evocation of a time before the dark shades of Hades forcibly interrupted the mother-daughter experience, Carmina's "delightful dream" (342) comes as a potentially promising glance toward the sort of matrilineal phylogenesis Virginia Woolf had in mind when she wrote, in A Room of One's Own: "For we think back through our mothers if we are women" (114).

With this, however, the mythic parallels come to an end. For unlike the Demeter myth, Collins's text by no means presents an affirmation of matriarchal values. Thus, although almost every woman in the novel "thinks back through her mother," good mothers, like the one Carmina remembers, are far outnumbered by abusive, "ill-temper[ed]" mothers like Miss Minerva's (344); "weak-minded, hysterical" mothers like Mrs Galilee's mother (460); or strong-minded, smothering mothers like Mrs Galilee herself. And in any case, feminine identity in Collins's text is ultimately validated not through one's mother but through one's man: for unlike Demeter's daughter in the myth, Collins's "Persephone" eventually relinquishes herself all too willingly, and quite literally too, to the male author of her being, Ovid Vere. Indeed, one of the main reasons for the novel's regrettably bad ending

is that the heroine's lingering partial amnesia--a mental blank extending from the "shock to her brain" (516) during the climactic scene to the time she regains full consciousness with the return of Ovid--represents a sort of arbitrary repression or erasure of a distinctly female past. "Past events," as Ovid blithely observes near the end, "which might have cast their shadow over all [Carmina's] life to come, have left no trace in her memory. I will make her a happy woman. Leave the rest to me" (534).

By positing--or rather by depositing the climactic scene of the "suffocation of the mother" as its forgotten content, Collins's text effectively wipes away all the "great and beautiful history" of hysteria[13] generated at the connotative fringes of that central dramatic gesture. Consequently, exploring the question of the hysterical symptomatology in Heart and Science is apt to leave one feeling somehow cheated. After all, hysterics, as Freud was soon to inform the world, "suffer mainly from reminiscences" (SE 2: 7). The trick, poor Carmina, lies not in burying the past, but in digging up the strength to remember it.

PART III:

SPIRITS

CHAPTER SIX

ANTI-BODIES OF DISEASE AND DEFENSE: SPIRIT-BODY RELATIONS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY CULTURE AND FICTION

> Desecrated as the body is, a vengeful ghost survives and hovers over it to scare.
>
> - Herman Melville, Moby-Dick, 1851

> The . . . primitive fear of ghosts is still deep in our bones, but it is unconscious. Rationalism and superstition are complementary. It is a psychological rule that the brighter the light, the blacker the shadow; in other words, the more rationalistic we are in our conscious minds, the more alive becomes the spectral world of the unconscious. And it is indeed obvious that rationality is in large measure an apotropaic defense against superstition, which is ever present and unavoidable.
>
> - C. G. Jung, Psychology and the Occult, 1948

> If we go further and enquire into the origin of . . . anxiety--and of affects in general--we shall be leaving the realm of pure psychology and entering the borderland of physiology.
>
> - Freud, "Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety," 1926

> The conception that antibodies, which should protect against disease, are also responsible for disease, sounds at first absurd.
>
> - Clemens von Pirquet, Serum Sickness, 1906

1. The Age of Anti-Bodies

The interest of novelists such as Trollope and Collins with the corporal dimensions of figures of melancholy and hysteria may be related to the influence of the solidly empiricist ethos that made the nineteenth century the great age of the Material Body. But

nevertheless, the era's collective fascination with spiritualistic phenomena such as ghosts and spectral apparitions certainly presents an antithetical sign of the times, a counter-current of spiritualism that one might term, in fact, literally anti-body in essence and effect. Indeed, only less grossly were Victorians on both sides of the Atlantic engrossed by an occult realm seemingly swarming with spirits and vapory wraiths. As many scholars have shown, Victorian traffic in spiritualism, which peaked in two crescendos of enthusiasm during the decades 1830-40 and 1870-80, precipitated the evolution of a veritable industry in "spirit communication" and spectacle, including such wildly popular forms of private and public entertainment as "materialization seances" and "phantasmagoria" exhibits.[1] Near the century's end, the Victorian penchant for spectral phenomena culminated in the establishment of such prominent intellectual offshoots of the spiritualism movement as the Society for Psychical Research and the International Congress of Experimental Psychology (Owen 1989; Kerr 1972). In literature, too, the period signalled the "heyday of the middle-class ghost" (Finucane 190); indeed, the modern ghost story dates its discovery and development to an all-time "high-water mark" (Briggs 14) through the works of such writers as Edgar Allen Poe, Charles Dickens, Guy de Maupassant, E. T. A. Hoffman, and Henry James, not to mention lesser lights such as Vernon Lee and Sheridan Le Fanu.

Though perhaps most readily evident in the realms of popular culture and fiction, the nineteenth-century captivation with ghosts and apparitions also finds expression in a remarkable array of medical, philosophic, and belletristic treatises on the related phenomena of hallucinations and phantoms. From such largely anecdotal (though

influential) works as Mrs. Catherine Steven Crowe's The Night Side of Nature (1848), to the SPR's vast compendium of apparition narratives, The Census of Hallucinations (1889), and the substantial contributions of such intellectual heavyweights as Henry Maudsley (1878; 1897) and William James (1890), this varied and extensive literature bears witness to the controversy surrounding much spectral phenomena of the period. Many contemporary medical writers, for example, did not hesitate to link deliberate spiritualistic attempts at ghostly conjurings with an unhealthy predisposition to hysteria or even "spiritualistic madness."[2] Moreover, the inherently ambiguous nature of many individual apparition encounters, as seemingly subjective, psychical experiences involving "ghosts" born of the mind, reinforced the dark associations between the realm of occult phenomena and that of contemporary psychopathology.

As historians of both psychology and the occult have been quick to point out, of course, ghosts have long been associated with forms of morbid mentation: with "states of delirium and psychic alienation, hallucination, the sense of being 'pursued' or possessed by horrifying thoughts" (Castle, "Phantasmagoria" 47). Burton, in The Anatomy of Melancholy, associates the seeing of "ghosts, goblins, etc." with a pathologic surplus of melancholy humors, as does Shakespeare, in Hamlet.[3] In 1572, Ludwig Lavater first used the word "hallucination" (from the Latin alucinato, meaning "a wandering of the mind, idle talk") to refer specifically to "Ghostes and Spirites Walking by Nyght," revenants attributable to "eyther . . . melancholick madnesse, weaknesse of the senses, fear, or some other perturbation" (Siegel and West 242; Briggs 142). The conceptual link between ghosts and forms of hallucinatory madness not only persisted into the nineteenth century,

but by then, the term "hallucination" had also expanded to include a more comprehensive range of aberrant perception as well as cognition. According to an influential definition propounded by Esquirol in 1838, "hallucination" could now be understood to encompass any perceptual processes which involved "ascribing a body and actuality to images" (qtd. in Siegel and West 242). This meant "all delusive impressions," as a British contemporary put it, "from the wandering mote before the eye, to the tremendous spectre, which are equally destitute of [objective] existence" (Ferriar 95). From the relatively benign base of spectral illusion or random optical simulacra to more ominous and fully fleshed phantasms of "Spectre-work and Demonology," apparitions thus came to be more and more subtly implicated with the domains of what, as Carlyle lamented in Sartor Resartus, "we have now named Madness and Diseases of the Nerves" (195).

In order to explore spectral phenomena as subjective symptoms of "Madness and Diseases of the Nerves" in nineteenth-century culture and fiction, this chapter takes a somewhat bifocal approach. Most immediately, I will seek to recover the essential terms of the contemporary debate over the semiological status and nosological significance of apparitions and hallucinations. Nineteenth-century perspectives on the putative "pathology" of spectral phenomena in turn provide the context for exploring the representation of ghosts in Villette and Wuthering Heights: two well-known mid-century texts instructive to juxtapose because of their evident tendencies toward opposite philosophical ends of the materialist-spiritualist spectrum underlying contemporary theories of apparitions.

At a second remove, my argument shifts to advance a modern perspective on the symptomatic relevance of ghosts in the wider context of the nineteenth-century cultural imagination, offering an interpretation that flows as much from the historical exigencies and psychophysiological nature of Victorian epistemology as it does from certain psychoanalytic precepts, themselves products of the later century. I proceed from the basic premise that the rise of interest in spectral apparitions--whether subjectively or objectively based--at this precise historical juncture invites a more detailed psychobiological analysis than it has been hitherto accorded.[4] In particular, I explore the Victorians' pervasive preoccupation with apparitions as a psychoanalyzable symptom of the collective psyche: not as a sign of "Madness and Diseases of the Nerves" in the Carlylean sense, to be sure, but as a sign,nonetheless, of a mass nervous dis-ease or "realistic anxiety" ultimately (though not exclusively) attributable to frightening new changes in physiological disease and mortality patterns.[5] The resurgent scourge of infectious epidemic diseases throughout most of the nineteenth century is of paramount importance in this respect. For in this case, it is within the contemporary context of the biologically defenseless body that the creations of the mind can be best understood: that the figure of the spectral apparition, more particularly, discloses its unique significance as a symptom of psychic dis-ease occasioned by the imminent threat of grave bodily disease. At the same time, in its essentially metaphorical function as an imaginary or psychical anti-body, the nineteenth-century ghost also manifests its inherently dualistic nature as a defensive mechanism against the very affect of anxiety it signals. In the final analysis, the ghostly anti-bodies

which captured the contemporary imagination, and which are, for example, variously embodied in the literary works of Poe, Dickens, James, and Melville, are also seen to prove a prophetic sort of defense mechanism, literally prefiguring--or shall we say, fore-shadowing--the actual discovery, in the late century, of lifesaving new kinds of antibodies.

My eventual object in this chapter, then, will be to trace the permutations and symptomatic expressions of a nineteenth-century dynamic between a spirit species of psychical anti-bodies and serum antibodies of a biological type: a phantom phenomenon which I hope to show is based upon something more profound than provocative word play alone. And by thus striking a match in the sepulchral space of "all manner of Spectre-work and Demonology," my larger purpose is to illuminate something of another dimension of intersemiotic exchange; that is, the fluid relation between the semiotic sphere of the body or soma, now, and the affective realm of the psyche or spirit.

2. The Semiology of Spectres in the Nineteenth Century

Nineteenth-century literature on apparitions is voluminous and diverse, often obscure, and almost as often highly eccentric.[6] However, as Terry Castle observes of the "host of polemical treatises on apparitions appear[ing] in England, France, and Germany beginning around 1800,"

> [t]he authors were usually medical men, concerned to eradicate superstition and place all seemingly supernatural phenomena on a solid psychological footing. Their arguments were resolutely Lockean and mechanistic in nature. ("Phantasmagoria" 54)

Heirs of the extreme empiricism of eighteenth-century philosophy, contemporary medical writers foreclosed spectral experiences as

intrinsically unreal, preferring to invoke, instead, a "new mentalist concept of hallucination to explain [such] occurrences" (Castle, "Phantasmagoria" 55).[7] But for them the problem nonetheless remained that nobody could seem to agree as to just what a hallucination was, and what it signified. Indeed, bearing in mind the sagacious weight of Galen's ancient aphorism, that symptoms are apt to follow diseases in the same way that a shadow follows a body, nineteenth-century semiologists were understandably more at a loss when it came to analyzing invisible "shadows" seemingly cast by the mind. Throughout the century, it is thus largely in the obscure semiological aspect and nosological import of hallucinations that the spectral apparition extended a phantom limb in the form of a not-so-ghostly bone of contention.

On the obverse side, medical arguments were opposed by a heterogeneous coalition of anti-empiricists, themselves united only in a common effort to pluck the mote from the Cyclops' eye of medicine, so to speak, and allow for other, non-pathologic interpretations of the phenomenology of apparitions and hallucinations. Since the counter-current of Victorian anti-materialism streamed along a continuum running from the muddy waters of a pseudo-scientific material spiritualism to the purer deeps of a more or less genuinely metaphysical and Romantic spiritualism, however, here too, complete consensus proved elusive: even as a non-symptom, the slippery spectre proved a sign of much dispute.

While most medical writers equated ghosts with hallucinations, it is instructive to note the discrepancies that abounded even in regard to the fundamental nature of "the faculty of spectral representation"

(Ferriar 100). Some, like John Ferriar, in his influential An Essay towards a Theory of Apparitions (1813), clearly linked hallucinations to visual or imagistic modalities of perception: "From recalling images by an art of memory," he stipulates, "the transition is direct to beholding spectral objects, which have been floating in the imagination" (100). Others, however, sought to emphasize the representational nature of the subjective apparition as an essentially cognitive process, more dependent, presumably, upon the symbolic and linguistic components of ideational constructs. Hence, the British surgeon Walter Cooper Dendy concluded in 1841 that a ghost was "nothing more than an intense idea"; to see a ghost denoted "an act of thinking."[8] Yet again, the language of writers like Samuel Hibbert, in his Sketches of a Philosophy of Apparitions (1825), an important early-century anti-spiritualist treatise, rather compellingly suggests a contemporary insight into the significance of hallucination as involving an inherently affective realm of "feeling" and "impression." For in contrast to other physicians, Hibbert defined the apparition as "a past feeling, renovated by the aid of morbific agents with a degree of vividness, equalling, or exceeding, an actual impression" (305).

Just as medical opinion differed as to whether hallucinations constituted the externalization of an articulate idea, a vivid but mute image, or even just a power surge of emotion, so too did it vary regarding the diagnostic significance of these enigmatic psychical symptoms. Between "normal" mental processes, such as dreaming, on the one hand, and morbid cases of insane delusion, on the other, where did spectral apparitions fit in? Which end of the scale should be tipped in emphasis, and why? Hibbert, for one, argued that "a theory of

apparitions is inseparably connected with the pathology of the human mind" inasmuch as such phenomena signalled the influence "of certain constitutional and morbid causes" which inevitably prompted "the quality and intensity of our mental states to undergo very remarkable modifications" (14). "[H]allucinations," echoed William Ireland, many decades later in The Blot upon the Brain (1893), "seem to me to partake of the abnormal, and to be indicative of the passage of healthy into diseased action" (35).

But though a minority appeared inclined to view hallucinations as veritable epiphenomena of mental derangement, most medical writers seem more circumspect on this point. John Ferriar, for instance, deemed spectral visions a form of "partial affection of the brain," but stressed that a patient might be "liable to such imaginary impressions of sight or sound" without necessarily "disordering his judgement or memory" (14-15). Similarly, while apparitions constituted "a very near step to insanity" for the influential German psychophysiologist Wilhelm Griesinger, he also held that they could "not [be] entirely confined to states of mental disease"; indeed, "nothing would be more erroneous than to consider a man to be mentally diseased because he had hallucinations" (91, 90). For both John Conolly and Henry Maudsley, the pre-eminent English authorities of their respective eras, phantasmal visions, ghost sightings or other such "juggles of starved brains" (Maudsley, Natural Causes 189) also did not, in and of themselves, signify insanity. It was not the actual experience of spectral apparitions which spelled madness, Conolly contended, but rather, "the insane belief" in the objective veracity of such visions which functioned as the criteria of insanity: "if the hallucination is known to be a hallucination, still

there is no madness; [but] if it is mistaken for reality, the man is mad" (Indications of Insanity 307). Maudsley agreed with his famous father-in-law, but, with characteristic gloominess, stressed the semiological importance of such manifestations as pretty reliable indications of a hereditary predisposition to insanity, anyway. In Maudsley's view, spectre sightings represented a fundamentally delusory "recrudescence" of, or "reversion" to, archaic superstition; an atavistic lapse from enlightened rationalism, or what he confidently terms "the modern disbelief in ghosts" (Natural Causes 176, 199).[9]

If nineteenth-century medical semiologists were by and large uncertain about the psychopathological import of the hallucinatory apparition, though, they became increasingly unanimous, over the course of the century, in at least one important respect: in their desire to trace spectral phenomena, along with all other signs of mental disturbance, to an organic substrate in diseases of the nerves. "The appearance of a ghost" in its "true light" invariably indicates "a symptom of bodily distemper," as Ferriar declared in 1813, setting the tone for ensuing decades. For indeed, although individual theories as to the precise physiological dysfunctions involved in the production of apparitions varied considerably--from ideas on sensory deprivation, vitiated blood supply, brain exhaustion or irritation, "instability of confederate nerve centres" (Maudsley, Natural Causes 180), or "internal expansion of optic nerves" (Griesinger 98)--medical writers of the age increasingly stood united in the general precept that spectral visions, "though they appear in the mind of man, yet are they bred in the body" (Hibbert 122).

From an opposing perspective, spiritualists and psychical researchers of the late nineteenth century viewed the spectre through different eyes--eyes which sought to vindicate it from the stigma of pathologic stigmata. Their respective positions may be more briefly outlined. The "ghost seers and ghost seekers" (Maudsley, Natural Causes 175) that might be called "material spiritualists" of the period consisted of those who sought to refute the alleged pathology of spectral phenomena by demonstrating the objective existence of phantoms and spirits through scientific means. Just as it was possible to extinguish the mind and yet have the body survive in a comatose state, so the material spiritualists believed in the possibility that, after the demise of the mortal frame, the spirit could live on in a "very refined" form--a sort of "nerve ether" or "nerve atmosphere" readily perceptible to the highly attuned sensibilities of the psychic medium (Crosland 105). Interestingly, in its espousal of a paradoxical "new metaphysical cosmology based upon an (albeit rarefied) form of matter" (Owen, preface, n.p.), this group shared as much in its common methodologies, language, and empiricist spirit with the medical materialists whose views they rejected, as it did in its common sympathies with other groups.

Conversely, more truly metaphysical spiritualists of the age not only spurned the idea of apparitions as symptomatic of a disordered state of the mind or the nerves, but also affirmed the possibility of their ontological existence on transcendent or supernatural rather than rationalistic grounds. Into this category could be shepherded not only such Christian spiritualists as typically argued that "the soul perceives that which the bodily eye cannot" (Crowe 2:380), but also

metaphysical philosopher-psychologists such as F. H. Bradley, whose declaration in 1897 that "the more that anything is spiritual, so much the more is it veritably real" signals a direct inversion of empiricist concepts of the "real" (qtd. in Siegel and West 249). The point to be underscored with regard to both material and metaphysical spiritualists, however, is that despite their differences, they remained brethren in the positive value they ascribed to the spectral vision as a consolatory sign: apparitions, after-images of the dead, signified after-life for the living.

Reflective of a much wider late-nineteenth-century cognitive shift to a new subjective epistemology, the theories of the psychical researchers of the time, on the other hand, herald an altogether more critical break with the empiricist mindset that shaped the thinking of earlier contemporaries. Convinced that hallucinations and spirit sightings presented primarily paranormal, and not necessarily pathologic, phenomena, British and American researchers such as Frederick Myers, Edward Gurney, and William James attempted to dispel the notion of the spectre as a symptom by providing a psychological foundation for belief, not in the objective, but in the subjective or intrapsychic reality of the spectral experience. According to Myers's theory, for instance, a ghost could be understood as a manifestation of "persistent personal energy": not as a material entity, but as a type of "mental projection" from an "agent" to the mind of a percipient. In some cases, the agent and percipient might lodge within the same being, "which meant," as one commentator has noted, "that the person 'seeing' the ghost was seeing something actually in his own mind, and thus . . . having a subjective, though not necessarily insane, experience" (Beidler

115, 110). William James, similarly, held that the mysteries of spectral apparitions had ultimately to be attributed to secrets of the "subliminal self," and wrote of such phenomena as subjective realities, "as good and true" as any externally verifiable realm: "An hallucination is a strictly sensational form of consciousness, as good and true a sensation as if there were a real object there. The object happens not to be there, that is all" (Principles of Psychology 115). In their ascription of a new phenomenological value to the subjective experience of hallucinations and apparitions, then, late-century researchers in effect redeemed the ghost from its empiricist status as--at best--an embarrassingly "unreal" phantom of "unreason."

Pioneer cartographers of inner space in general, psychical researchers studied spectral occurrences in the larger context of altered states of consciousness in general, including somnambulism, hypnotic and hypnagogic trances, spirit possession, and double consciousness (see James, Exceptional Mental States). As such, they placed a new importance on the notion of a general semiology of perception, in which perception, thoughts, fantasies, dreams, hallucinations, and so forth could not be sharply distinguished from one another, but were rather to be conceived of as on a dynamic continuum, with one state capable of evolving into another.[10] Far from intrinsically morbid manifestations, they viewed hallucinatory visions instead as "often only extremes of the perception process" (James, Principles of Psychology 115). Through similar arguments for a ubiquitous human capacity for such "exceptional" mental and perceptual states, the thrust of the psychical researchers' work might be characterized as an attempt to demorbidify the realm of ghosts, placing

them under the new and more neutral terminological aegis of the "paranormal."

The birth of a paranormal realm of the psychical occult, however, by no means presented an unproblematic resolution to the ever-incongruous status of ghosts and apparitions. Indeed, in this respect, the continuing controversy over the semiology of spectres in the late century affords an interesting analogue to that of spiritualistic trance phenomena, which was also hotly contested as a form of ecstasy or insanity (Williams 233). Like the "nerve ether" of the material spiritualists' ghosts, the terms of the debate by the century's end appear only to have been refined. For by then, a new question began to fill the air: how normal, they could now wonder, was the paranormal?[11]

3. Cross-Currents: Villette and Wuthering Heights

Although neither Villette (1853) nor Wuthering Heights (1847) may in any simple sense be characterized as a ghost tale--for they are, each of them, many wonderful things--they are both good examples of what Julia Briggs calls "the psychological ghost story": a work wherein mental disorder is in some way implicated in the spectral experience, usually by an ambiguous suggestion that apparitions are products of delusion (51, 147). Like Henry James's famous example of this genre in The Turn of the Screw, both the Brontë sisters' novels probe the semiological status of spectral visions as potential indications of "Madness or Diseases of the Nerves." But they are also more than just appropriate generic examples. For in their fundamentally antithetical representations of ghosts, the novels of Charlotte and Emily Brontë cast each other into striking relief, managing to encompass between them the

entire nineteenth-century dialectic of materialism and spiritualism, of empiricism and subjectivism, and of naturalism and supernaturalism, as it has disclosed itself in the debates over the significance of apparitions.

"Say what you will, reader," maintains the beleaguered heroine of Villette upon her first sickening encounter with "a figure all black or white" "in the middle of [a] ghostly chamber": "tell me I was nervous or mad; affirm that I was unsettled . . . declare that I dreamed: this I vow--I saw there--in that room--on that night--an image like--a NUN."[12] Lucy Snowe's immediate and defensive rebuttal of the reader's assumed scepticism may be forgiven her as a well-grounded fear. Even in Brontë's earlier Jane Eyre (1846), for example, Rochester attempts to dismiss Jane's nocturnal vision of the white shrouded Bertha--who appears as a "foul German spectre" or "Vampyre" to trample Jane's bridal veil--as merely "the creature of an over-stimulated brain" (ch. 25). So also in Villette does the physician Dr. John, to whom Lucy describes her experience, promptly declare hers "all a matter of the nerves": "I think it a case of spectral illusion: I fear, following on and resulting from long-continued mental conflict" (330).

The varying responses of Brontë's heroines to such rationalist, materialist explanations of "spectral illusion" are instructive. In the earlier novel, the more spunky Jane Eyre is able to assert unequivocally her conviction of her own lucidity, informing Mr. Rochester: "Sir, depend upon it, my nerves were not in fault; the thing was real: the transaction actually took place" (ch. 25). Lucy Snowe, though, is not so confident of her apperception of reality: "I shudder at the thought of being liable to such an illusion! It seemed so real. Is there no

cure?--no preventative?" (330). Genuinely shaken, Brontë's later heroine is "left secretly and sadly to wonder, in [her] own mind, whether that strange thing was of this world, or of a realm beyond the grave; or whether indeed it was only the child of malady, and I of that malady the prey" (333). Later on, however, a calmer Lucy also comes to an outright rejection of Dr. John's diagnosis of "optical illusion--nervous malady, and so on," claiming: "not one bit did I believe him; but I dared not contradict: doctors are so self-opinionated, so immoveable in their dry, materialist views" (338).

As Sally Shuttleworth has argued, Lucy's equivocal stance reflects one way in which "the constitution of neurosis" in Villette "both absorbs and resists the definitions and codifications of female experience offered by the male medical establishment" (313). In the same way, but more specifically, Brontë's novel may be seen both to validate and to gainsay medical theories of the spectral apparition as a morbid manifestation of nervous disease, and "a very near step to insanity." Most obviously, of course, insofar as the "phantom" nun of Villette is disclosed at the novel's end as a hoax--as a trick perpetrated by the masquerading fop, de Hamal, and thus rationally explained after the manner of Radcliffean natural supernaturalism--Dr. John's medical diagnosis of nervous pathology is ultimately disproven. But the extent to which this diagnosis is also pointedly confirmed by Brontë's text even before the advent of the spectral nun bears emphasis. For the self-styled "constitutionally nervous" (456) Lucy has indeed suffered from "a long-continued mental conflict" which has earlier rendered her liable to phantasmagoric hallucinations. Thus, during the Long Vacation, when the heroine's "overstretched" nerves

plunge her into "a strange fever of the nerves and blood" and a "peculiarly agonizing depression" (231), she sees the "ghastly white beds" of the empty school dormitory "turning into spectres--the coronal of each became a death's head; huge and sun-bleached" (232). Explicitly identified as symptomatic of a "bodily distemper" of the nerves, this spectral experience recalls Ferriar's theory of a "partial affection of the brain" which does not necessarily impair "judgment or memory." Lucy, at any rate, protests that during this horrific vision, she is "not delirious": "I was in my sane mind" (232). Despite the heroine's clear-headed perspective on her spectral scene, however, it is noteworthy that this episode precipitates a feverish visionary delirium from which her memory and judgment do not immediately emerge unimpaired. After the unconscious spell following her wild confession to a Roman Catholic priest, Lucy regains at first only a most tenuous sense of reality, a vision "distempered" not only because she is confused by what appears to be (and is) the familiar furnishings of her godmother's house at Bretton, but because all her eye rests on "struck it as spectral," even her own face in the mirror (237-38). A prelude of sorts to the narcotic, dream-like scene of the final fête night, such earlier episodes establish Lucy's frightful propensity to spectral aberrations and delusions, and serve to affirm Dr. John's "dry, materialist views" in almost every context but that of the nun.

In a more comprehensive sense, Villette may also be seen as a novel which, in its profound movement towards materialization--materialization both of the self and of the spectral anti-body[13]--reflects the fundamentally empiricist ethos which underpinned the theoretic agendas of both nineteenth-century medical men and material spiritualists. Mary

Jacobus has called attention to the fact that Brontë's spectral nun actually materializes at the end of the novel in dual respects: not only as the figure of de Hamal, that is, but also as a sort of literal "resurrection of the flesh" (Villette 563) of the legendary Justine Marie, in the form of the living namesake of the dead nun (53). And in the same way that the "risen ghost" of the mysterious Justine Marie ultimately manifests itself in the form of a "well-nourished, fair and fat of flesh" "bourgeoise belle" (563), so does Brontë's novel as a whole progressively chart the "rising character" of Lucy Snowe (394) from an obscure, timorous, and ghostly creature who lives in "[her] own still, shadow-world" (185), and is deemed by others a "being" as "inoffensive as a shadow" (403), to a stronger, healthier, and more assertive woman who will not rest content as any "bright lady's shadow" (382), but increasingly claims substance and significance of her own. A direct correlation is developed in the novel between the heroine's sense of corporeality and the notion of "mens sana in corpore sano," the healthy mind in the healthy body. It is only once Lucy has progressed from an earlier sense of herself as a shadowy, phantom being that she is able to dispel once and for all the spectres of madness and nervous disease which have haunted her:

> My head reeled, for by the faint night-lamp, I saw stretched on my bed the old phantom--the NUN . . . I was not overcome. Tempered by late incidents, my nerves disdained hysteria. Warm from illuminations . . . I defied spectra. In a moment, without exclamation, I had rushed on the haunted couch; nothing leaped out, or sprang, or stirred; all the movement was mine, so was all the life, the reality, the substance, the force; as my instinct felt. I tore her up--the incubus! I held her on high--the goblin! I shook her loose--the mystery! And down she fell--down all round me--down in shreds and fragments--and I trode upon her. (569)

Vindicating her of any lingering suspicion of delusory malady, Lucy's destruction of the nun's effigy comes as an ironic revelation, not only at the expense of supernaturalists in general, but also of material spiritualists in particular: for as a "long bolster" of cloth, Brontë's certainly proves one phantom of verifiable substance. It is indeed significant that in this mid-century work the reality of the bogus apparition should prove, literally, a swath of material. For the equation of the material with "reality," of course, actually inheres in the word itself, which stems from the Latin root res, denoting thing, material, or object. Insofar as the material realm comes to constitute the insuperable index of the real in Charlotte Brontë's novel, Lucy Snowe's action of grasping, ripping, and trampling cloth appears as a clear affirmation of her sanity: she is, as the saying has it, "in touch with reality."[14]

In fact, not only concepts of empirical reality, but those of the spiritual and numinous realm, as well, carry the archaic traces of an original sense of material "thingness." The very earliest notions of souls, ghosts, and demons, as Freud was to point out within a few decades, arose upon contemplation of the dead corpse (SE 14: 294). Originally such spirits were thought of "as [being] very similar to persons": only "in the course of a long development" or evolution did they lose their "material characteristics and become to a high degree 'spiritualized'" (SE 13: 76). And that the material root of the spirit should haunt even the word "ghost" is also pertinent in the context of Villette's climactic scene. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the obscure, pre-Teutonic origins of our word "ghost" point to senses not only of "fury," "anger," and "ugly," but also of "to wound, to tear,

to pull to pieces." As the latent depths of language begin to surface in Lucy Snowe's action of wounding, tearing, pulling her "ghost" to pieces, the darkly subversive aspect of this episode becomes apparent, too: for what appears at first an unambiguous affirmation of the heroine's sanity begins to take on hues of a sort of maenadic madness of fury and anger, a faint repetition, perhaps, of Bertha Mason's mad dance upon the bridal veil in Jane Eyre.[15]

While Villette thus culminates with the materialization or embodiment of spectral anti-bodies, living and "dead," Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights, an anti-body book in a more fundamental sense of the word, flows in an obverse direction toward what Terry Castle has termed the "spectralization" or "ghostifying" of the inner mental self and of the other: a metaphoric internalization or "absorption of ghosts into the world of thought" and perception, which coincides with the ruse of anti-apparition arguments and scientific rationalism at the end of the eighteenth century ("Phantasmagoria" 29).[16] Called a Romantic "symphony on the intertwined themes of love and death" (Aries 443), Wuthering Heights most clearly reflects the views and values of the metaphysical spiritualists in its treatment of apparitions as supranatural signs--an essentially consolatory credo most emphatically articulated in the novel by Heathcliff, who feels "unspeakably consoled" by the felt "presence" of his dead love's spirit, and who maintains "a strong faith in ghosts," and "a conviction that they can, and do exist, among us!"[17]

But to observe that the novel depicts a form of transcendent reality which eschews the gross confines of the corporal and earthly--a world in which corpses seem to smile more often than living beings, since fleshly dissolution promises the joy of a higher consummation--is

not necessarily to preclude the spectre of mental disorder in Emily Brontë's spiritous realm, either. As in Villette, in fact, spectral visions are overtly assigned a status as symptomatic of a nervous pathology which increases through "feverish bewilderment to madness" (122). Indeed, much as Lucy Snowe protests her sanity when she hallucinates the grotesque death's heads, so Emily Brontë's heroine, the elder Catherine, insists to Nelly Dean that she is "not wandering" in mind when she perceives "the black press" and an unrecognizable visage in her sickroom (123). While in one sense Catherine's disordered visions may be regarded as a sort of confused "waking dream," as Nelly suggests, or as a type of spiritual vision in which "the soul," to recall Mrs. Crowe's words, "perceives that which the bodily eye cannot," her delusory perceptions, and particularly her non-recognition of her own haunting image in the mirror she fancies a press, are also manifest signs of a grievous self-alienation: symptoms of a sort of premature disassociation of Catherine's mind and soul from the facades of both her dying bodily self, "this shattered prison" (160), and the stultifying confines of "her hated sick-chamber" (135). Estranged from the face that stares from the mirror, Catherine in her madness perceives herself as a sort of spectral anti-body. "Don't you see that face?" she frets, "gazing earnestly at the mirror." "And say what I could," Nelly Dean narrates, "I was incapable of making her comprehend it to be her own" (123).

The heroine of Wuthering Heights never fully recovers from "the shock of what was denominated a brain fever" (134), and after her demise, it is once again her haunting image which returns to threaten sanity--this time, that of the grieving Heathcliff. Obsessed to the

point of "a monomania on the subject of his departed idol," Heathcliff, near the end of the novel, is tormented by the "aspect [of] the ghost of [his] immortal love" which Hareton's uncanny resemblance provokes (324). Sufficiently eidetic to obtrude onto his conscious perception of reality, apparitions of Catherine swarm about Heathcliff as earlier in the novel the ghostly "white letters" of her name swarmed about the somnolent Lockwood "as vivid as spectres" (17). "And what does not recall her?" cries Brontë's distracted hero: "I cannot look down to this floor, but her features are shaped on the flags! In every cloud, in every tree--filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object by day, I am surrounded with her image!" (324). Brontë's representation of an obsession with a haunting image or "mental apparition" which commands a "potentially daemonic hold over [the subject]" is a graphic illustration of the essentially Romantic sensibility which began to manifest itself during the late eighteenth century, when "a growing sense of the ghostliness of other people," and a marked preoccupation with the "ghost of [a] dead or absent person, conceived as a kind of visionary image or presence in the mind," began to take on "a new and compelling subjective reality" (Castle, "Spectralization of the Other" 249, 237).

To the extent that both Catherine's hallucination and Heathcliff's mental apparitions reflect a spectralization of, respectively, self and other, the ghostly anti-bodies of Wuthering Heights afford a stark contrast to the materialization scenes of sister Charlotte's Villette. And although ghosts are implicated with shades of mental disease in both novels, Wuthering Heights also differs from Villette in the way in which it anticipates the agenda of the late-century psychical researchers by

emphasizing the fluid interrelatedness of "pathological" and "normal" spectral experiences. Boundaries between waking and sleeping, conscious and unconscious states, and dreams and apparitions are especially nebulous and ambiguous in this text. Lockwood's ghastly but by no means abnormal nightmare of the importuning ghost child at the window, for instance, is presented as a process closely analogous to Heathcliff's sort of monomaniacal mental visions. Both, that is, are forms of eidetic imagery prompted by an image of Catherine--an image of her face or of her name--which, in Lockwood's words, "personified itself," when the imagination "no longer was under control" (26). "Only the thinnest line," Terry Castle remarks, speaking of The Mysteries of Udolpho, "separates fearing or wishing for the return of the dead from actually seeing them return" ("Spectralization of the Other" 241). So indeed does Brontë's text almost erase "the thinnest line" that may separate Heathcliff's monomaniacal and hyperconscious wish for the return of Cathy's ghost, and Lockwood's apparently unconscious fear of the same. And while it is true that Villette offers, in the end, the dark hint that de-mystifying the spectral may involve a madness of its own, Wuthering Heights, with its much stronger emphasis on the essential similarities and blurred continuities between disturbed "waking" visions and "normal" nocturnal phantasms, ultimately offers its own unsettling glimpse into the latent irrationalism of everyday perceptual processes.

4. Neurosis: Repression, Defense, and Dis-ease

Given that the Victorians themselves so often tended to ascribe a pathologic significance to spectral apparitions in their medical and literary texts, what are we to make of the prominent status of ghosts in

the larger context of nineteenth-century thought as a whole? As a sign of the times, the period's veritable fixation on spiritualistic phenomena can be approached from a psychoanalytic perspective which will foreground the inherently dualistic processes involved in symptom formation: processes of pathological repression and of defense, whose dynamic begins to reveal how the fleeting figure of the nineteenth-century ghost may be understood as, paradoxically, both a sign of mass anxiety contingent upon an interplay of internal and external threats, and as an instinctive counter to that dis-ease.

The Freudian conception of the ghost as an external "return" of the repressed unconscious is well known, and perhaps the most obvious point of departure here. In The Interpretation of Dreams, Freud offers the following formulation:

> My explanation of hallucinations in hysteria and paranoia and of visions in mentally normal subjects is that they are in fact regressions--that is, thoughts transformed into images--but that the only thoughts that undergo this transformation are those which are intimately linked with memories that have been suppressed or have remained unconscious. (SE 5: 544)

The process by which Freud theorized such repressed ideas were "transformed into images" he termed "projection": "An internal perception is suppressed, and, instead, its content, after undergoing a certain kind of distortion, enters consciousness in the form of an external perception" (SE 12: 66). Notably, the idea of apparitions as symptomatic projects was, it seems, intuitively grasped by nineteenth-century ghost-story writers such as Ambrose Bierce, who declared them "the outward and visible sign of an inward fear" (113).

If on the one hand, however, a repressed "inward fear" or conflict may stimulate the genesis of the spectral symptom, then on the other,

the phenomenon must also be understood in terms of an essentially dialectical psychic economy--one in which symptoms also, simultaneously, constitute defense mechanisms. For paradoxically, pathogenic processes of repression and obviating processes of psychical defense are mutually implicated in complex and fascinating ways. The forces of repression activated by anxiety, the "starting point . . . of neurotic processes in general," are also a defensive mechanism in that they provide the human organism with a means of coping with traumas or affects the ego finds unsupportable. Conversely, the concept of the defense mechanism, whose raison d'être is ostensibly to avert danger, also necessarily entails a falsification of "inner perception" which "pave[s] the way for and precipitate[s] the outbreak of neurosis" (Freud SE 23: 209-10). Eventually, it became clear to Freud that "the defensive process is analogous to the flight by means of which the ego removes itself from a danger that threatens it from outside. The defensive process is an attempt at flight from an instinctual danger" (SE 20: 145). In their intrinsically dualistic nature, repression and defense appear as Janus-faced inversions of one another.[18] And viewed specifically in its defensive aspect, the spectral symptom, in particular, discloses its anti-pathologic function as a means of coping with unconscious, intrapsychic anxiety by displacing or externalizing it:

> by means of the whole defensive mechanism . . . set in action[,] a projection outward of the instinctual danger [is] achieved. The ego behaves as if the danger of a development of anxiety threatened it not from the direction of an instinctual impulse but from the direction of a perception, and it is thus enabled to react against this external danger. (SE 14: 184)[19]

E. A. Sheppard, in her study of Henry James, alludes briefly to this defensive function of nineteenth-century spirit phenomena, when she

speaks of the tantalizing oral tradition of ghost stories, told "in self-defense, as it were, [to] hypostatize . . . fears" (3).

But the "affective symbol" or "affective state" of anxiety or fear also constitutes an ambiguous and recondite factor in symptom-formations of the neuroses in general.[20] And what is of most importance for the purposes of my argument is the increasing emphasis placed upon the role of the ego and the perception of external dangers in Freud's continuously evolving conception of neurotic dis-ease and its symptomatic manifestations. The earliest Freudian theory of anxiety as the outcome of repressed libido is succinctly summarized by Rollo May:

> the individual experiences libidinal impulses which he interprets as dangerous, the libidinal impulses are repressed, they become automatically converted into anxiety, and they find their expression as free-floating anxiety [the unfixed general apprehensiveness of anxiety neurosis] or as symptoms which are anxiety-equivalents. (116)

In works in such as "Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety" (1926) and "Anxiety and Instinctual Life" (1933), however, Freud actually reversed the principal dynamic of this first theory while reviewing the animal phobias of little Hans and the Wolf Man. He now maintained that

> it was anxiety which produced repression and not, as I formerly believed, repression which produced anxiety . . . . It is always the ego's attitude of anxiety which is the primary thing and which sets repression going. Anxiety never arises from repressed libido. (SE 20: 108-09)[21]

It is not only that anxiety or dis-ease is now seen to set neurotic symptom-formation going as a "primary thing" or "necessary prerequisite" (SE 20: 144). Much to his surprise, Freud also began to appreciate, at this point, the extent to which "neurotic anxiety has changed in our hands into realistic anxiety, into fear of particular external situations of danger" (SE 22: 93). Freud, that is, came to qualify

carefully his earlier view that "the danger feared in neurotic anxiety is simply that of inner instinctual impulses" (May 118). "The anxiety belonging to the animal phobias" of little Hans and the Wolf Man, he perceived, constituted an "untransformed fear of castration": "It was therefore a realistic fear, a fear of a danger which was actually impending or was judged to be a real one" (SE 20: 108). Asking himself again "what sort of anxiety" was crucial to such instances of phobia, Freud writes in "Anxiety and Instinctual Life":

> Only [an] anxiety in the face of a threatening external danger--that is to say, a realistic anxiety . . . . [For] above all, it is not a question of whether castration is really carried out; what is decisive is that the danger is one that threatens from the outside and that the child believes in it. (SE 22: 86)

As Rollo May suggests, the critical point of these later analyses is that "the ego perceives [a] danger," a danger which signals to the analyst a complex "interrelationship of external and internal factors" (118, 119). With regard to formation of neurotic symptoms, an ambiguity of the outside and inside once again begins to manifest itself: "In relation to [a] traumatic situation, in which the subject is helpless, external and internal dangers, real dangers and instinctual dangers converge" (Freud SE 20: 168).[22] Or, more particularly, "an instinctual demand," as Freud came to realize, "often only becomes an (internal) danger because its satisfaction would bring on an external danger--that is, because the internal danger represents an external one" (SE 20: 167-68).

Freud's belated insights into the force of "realistic anxiety" as an integral component of obsessional neurosis will bear significantly upon my theory of the imaginary, ghostly anti-body as a symptom of

nineteenth-century dis-ease. For the moment, though, it is worthwhile to underscore the basic ramifications of the conceptual trend we have just traced. "What this shift [in Freudian thought] implies," as Rollo May contends, "is that anxiety and its symptoms are seen not as merely the outcome of a simple intrapsychic process, but as arising out of the individual's endeavour to avoid danger situations in his world," his interpersonal or environmental milieu (124).[23] In terms of the repression-defense dialectic established above, the neurotic symptom can therefore function "not merely [as] a protection against inner impulses," but also as a defense against "the anxiety-creating situation" (May 125, 86). As Freud concludes in "Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety,"

> It might be said that symptoms are created so as to avoid the generating of anxiety. But this does not go deep enough. It would be truer to say that symptoms are created so as to avoid a danger-situation whose presence has been signalled by the generation of anxiety. (SE 20: 129)

Creating, in effect, a substitutive satisfaction which serves to circumvent or mitigate a realistic, external threat, "repressions and symptoms" can, ultimately, "best be viewed as the organism's means of adjusting to a danger situation," elements of which may straddle conscious and unconscious poles (May 126-27).

5. The Imaginary Anti-Bodies of the Nineteenth Century

In relation to the nineteenth century, however, psychoanalytic conceptions of the spectral symptom may seem to raise at least as many questions as they would answer. Signalling as they do an attempt to negate the terrible finality of death, to sustain the illusion that "the precious dead [are] not really dead" (Castle, "Spectralization of the

Other" 242), ghosts and ghost belief can be viewed as the symptomatic expression of an intensely ambivalent attitude toward mortality: an instinctual dis-ease endemic to all of human history.[24] And yet, in what sense can the nineteenth century--of all periods, one saturated with elaborate tokens and trappings of mourning and death--be said to reflect such conflicting attitudes? Secondly, as both signs of and defenses against a universal and timeless dis-ease, how are the ghosts of this particular period to be distinguished from those of others?

There is no doubt that the nineteenth century was an era peculiarly hyperconscious of the presence of death in its midst. From the crypts and vaults of Poe's tales; to the pervasive apostrophes and asides on death in Dickens novels such as Bleak House or Our Mutual Friend; to the mourning rings and rituals, the black crepe, black-bordered stationery, gritted murmurs of "God's will"; and, indeed, the ever-mournful Queen Victoria herself, all indications would seem to suggest more of a fetishization than a denial of mortality. But perhaps all the manifest signs of the nineteenth century's conscious acknowledgement of death need to be set against, or distinguished from, the shadowy traces of a concomitant suppression of it. Perhaps the contradictory split consciousness of the age with regard to attitudes toward death is best understood in terms of Jung's "psychological rule" that "the brighter the light, the blacker the shadow; in other words, the more rationalistic we are in our conscious minds, the more alive becomes the spectral world of the unconscious" (144).

It is, indeed, precisely such an unconscious denial of death to which French historian Phillippe Ariès has called attention in the context of modern industrial culture. In The Hour of Our Death, Ariès

argues that around the late eighteenth century, more repressive emotional attitudes towards death, caused by a complex variety of demographic, societal, and philosophic factors, subtly begin to manifest themselves in such phenomena as the removal of cemeteries to outlying areas, increased privacy of mourning in middle-class urban life, and, especially, new cosmetic emphases on hiding or denying signs of bodily decay and death. The practise of embalming, he notes, witnessed a resurgence of popularity at this time. Part of the age's obsession with what he calls "the beautiful death" expressed itself in a "Romantic Cult of the Dead" of the sort apparent in a text like Wuthering Heights: a fascination with idealized images of the deceased which, Ariès says, directly prefigures the nineteenth-century spiritualist movement and interest in spectral phenomena.[25] The rise of the ghost's popularity in the nineteenth century, then, can be related to a historically specific wave of romantic sentimentalism, which, seeking to avoid or repress unpleasant reminders of mortality, "exalted death, . . . deified death, . . . and at the same time . . . transformed . . . the [lost] loved one, into an inseparable immortal" (Ariès 582-83).

The point I want to make, however, is that nineteenth-century ghosts may be understood as symptomatic manifestations, not only of a latent dis-ease with mortality, generally, but of phobic fears of death by contagious diseases, in particular: the response to an insoluble and real, if invisible, external threat or "danger situation." Indeed, the great incidence of infectious epidemics during the nineteenth century, although it is overlooked by Ariès, is one factor which had an undeniably profound impact on the Victorian psyche, especially in terms of anxieties related to death. After a decline in major epidemics

during the eighteenth century, the first cholera epidemic of 1831-32 marked "an alarming return to the age of epidemics" (Wohl 118). As a "direct consequence of increased human mobility" during the Industrial Revolution, pandemics of highly communicable diseases swept along the trade routes of the world at fairly regular intervals (Stanley and Joske 555; see also Spink 163), evoking in their wakes the spectre of mass, sudden death to a degree almost unparalleled since the time of the Black Death. As one commentator has observed, cholera, most especially, "was the classic epidemic disease of the nineteenth century, as plague had been for the fourteenth" (Spink 162). "The very name of cholera," Henri Blanc frankly confessed in a medical treatise of 1873, "inspires a deadly fear" (33).[26]

As historian Anthony Wohl writes,

> the possibility of sudden and often painful death from one or other of the many epidemic diseases of the day simply was one of the inescapable facts of nineteenth-century life. . . . [T]he rise . . . of widespread infectious and contagious diseases, and especially of cholera, a disease new to the English experience and the first national epidemic since the seventeenth-century plague, served to remind the Victorians that their society, however progressive, was not immune to the scourges of the past. (117-18)

Of all the major epidemic diseases of the age--cholera, tuberculosis, scarlet fever, diphtheria, typhus, typhoid, influenza, and smallpox--only a vaccination against the smallpox was available to the Victorians. Cholera, which killed thousands upon thousands in England alone during four major outbreaks, had an "impact out of all proportion to its statistical importance," according to Wohl, exacting a fatality rate of between forty and sixty percent of those who contracted the disease (118).[27]

Nor was the New World immune to such an alarming "danger situation": Susanna Moodie, in her Roughing It in the Bush, recalls with great vividness the quarantine measures implemented at the port of Gross Isle on the St. Lawrence River in 1832, a futile attempt to stem the spread of cholera, which eventually passed from Canada to major American cities such as New York and Philadelphia. Stories of "Typhoid Mary," the New York cook Mary Mallon, who unwittingly infected fifty-four people with fever before being identified as a carrier, have attained the status of a cultural legend. In terms of nineteenth-century epidemiology, Great Britain generally "served as a pattern" for the United States, although as Wesley Spink notes, "the Civil War and the postwar problems added to the deferment of public health concerns" in America (28, 35).

Wohl himself suggests that, through their excessively ritualized conventions of death and mourning, the Victorians helped to "inoculate themselves against [the] shock" of sudden and multiple deaths by infectious diseases (117). In the same way, however, the period's obsession with ghosts of all types--whether literary, paranormal, or spiritualistic--bears the mark of the same "psychological imperatives" (Wohl 117). That it may have been in part, at least, precisely the biological defencelessness of the age before a resurgent tide of epidemic diseases that stimulated and heightened the imaginative production of ghosts at this time is suggested, in other words, by the metaphorical relevance of the ghost as a psychic agent of defense: as an imaginary anti-body, a protean, mental substitute and compensatory externalization of the very protein antibodies which serve to neutralize pathogenic toxins in the blood, and which the populace at large so

direly lacked. As a projection of the collective psyche, the imaginary anti-body provided, in essence, a means of instinctual "apotropaic defense" or self-inoculation against the immanent germs of a virulent new dis-ease of death, a dis-ease it at once symptomized and creatively combatted.

In other words, apparitional phenomena of the age may be understood in terms of a defensive response by which "a whole people" sought to "replace an inadequate attitude," or adjust psychologically to the new and deadlier reality of life in an age that raged with epidemic diseases. For "spirits are complexes of the collective unconscious," as Carl Jung put it,

> which appear when the individual loses his adaptation to reality, or which seek to replace the inadequate attitude of a whole people by a new one. They are therefore either pathological fantasies or new but as yet unknown ideas. (122)

In a very literal metaphoric sense, phantom anti-bodies of the era manifest themselves as the fore-shadows of "a new but as yet unknown idea": the idea of biological antibodies against fatal contagious diseases. The imaginary embodiment of a collective hallucinatory wish, as it were, the nineteenth-century anti-body thus figuratively points to its origin as an instinctive immune response to a very real contemporary threat or "danger-situation," revealing in the process its inherently bifacial aspect: the ghost of a deadly dis-ease and an immuno-goblin of the mind.[28]

6. The Age of Antibody; or, Immuno-Goblin Meets Immunoglobulin

Tracing the interplay of antibodies of serum and anti-bodies of the spirit over the course of the nineteenth century and into our own confirms what has begun to become apparent: that a direct and mutually influential relationship exists between the two. Freud's early formulations of the principle of psychological defense mechanisms in the 1880s and 1890s were in fact matched, in the late 1870s and beyond, by the discovery of the principle of active acquired immunity in the nascent fields of immunology and bacteriology, the achievement of scientists such as Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch.[29] This historical coincidence suggests the broader perspective in which we can view psychological and biological antibodies of the era; namely, as parallel products of a fundamentally psychophysiological heuristic model.

Although it is true that the infectious nature of the biological diseases in question marks a crucial difference from the case of mental diseases, the principle of defense upon which both psychic anti-bodies and their serum counterparts operate is strikingly similar. In biology, acquired immunity denotes the process of inoculation whereby an individual is injected with an attenuated strain of a viral microorganism with a view to prevention. In the same way that a body builds up a resistance to certain pathogens through forms of mild exposure, so, we may note, is "ego modification" or mental resistance to certain pathogenic affects sometimes achieved by an individual's prior exposure to less acutely traumatic disturbances. Moreover, in their unsettling discovery of autotoxins--self-poisoning antibodies of the type responsible for allergies, for example--late-nineteenth-century immunologists uncovered a defense-disease mechanism analogous to Freud's

repression-defense complex. It is perhaps with a sense of something akin to the "horror autotoxicus"[30] that struck the immunologists, that Freud wrote of the potentially self-subverting "defense" mechanisms, whose purpose, like that of serum antibody, was also ostensibly to avert dangers: "It cannot be disputed that they are successful . . . but it is also certain that they themselves may become dangerous" (SE 23: 240). And finally, it may be noted that the cellular and cerebral dynamics of both biological and psychological antibody formations hinge upon a similar factor: the ability of the organism to distinguish bodies external or "foreign" to itself. It is telling indeed that Freud (always "a sucker for an analogy," as Jane Gallop has noted somewhere) employs the immunological metaphor of "a foreign body . . . keeping up a constant succession of stimuli and reactions in the tissue in which it [is] embedded" as an all-time favorite in his descriptions of symptom-formation in the neuroses.[31]

Interestingly enough, there is also evidence in the language of the scientific fields of immunology and bacteriology which attests to the subtle link between the occult and psychopathologic realm of spectral manifestations and that of the biological antibody and immunoglobulin. For even today, such disciplines echo with traces of imaginary anti-bodies and immuno-goblins, utilizing such suggestive technical terms as "ghost" cells, "toxin spectra," and "chimeras."

7. Literary Embodiments of the Anti-Body

The mutual repercussions of science and psychology in the constitution of the nineteenth-century spectral apparition are anticipated and variously elaborated in a range of contemporary fiction,

which, on the whole, not only reconfirms the direct link between ghosts and contagious disease in the contemporary mind, but in some cases actually illustrates the function of the ghost as an anti-body of dis-ease and defense. It is in literature of the period, after all, that one finds the most articulate fore-shadowings of truths that science and psychoanalysis had yet to strain toward.

Edgar Allen Poe's 1845 tale "The Sphinx," for example, traces a clear correlation between mass deaths from infectious disease, mental malaise, and manifestations of an apparitional anti-body. Set "during the dread reign of the cholera in New York" in 1832, Poe's story recounts the hallucinatory experiences of an unnamed narrator who has fallen into a "condition of abnormal gloom" as a result of numerous and sudden bereavements attributable to cholera.[32] "Not a day elapsed which did not bring us news of the decease of some acquaintance," he recalls of the epidemic.

> Then, as the fatality increased, we learned to expect daily the loss of some friend. At length we trembled at the approach of every messenger. The very air from the South seemed to us redolent with death. That palsying thought, indeed, took entire possession of my soul. I could neither speak, think, nor dream of anything else. My host was of a less excitable temperament, and, although greatly depressed in spirits, exerted himself to sustain my own. (1246)

Poe's story suggests that, unlike his host, the mentally rattled narrator is "sufficiently alive" to the encroaching "shadows" of death to be "affected by unrealities" (1246).

In this case, the anti-body of the narrator's mental disorder--a monomaniacal obsession with death--discloses itself not as a conventional ghost, but as a more grotesque "visionary creature" (1249):

a "living monster of [the] hideous conformation" of a gigantic fly (1247). "A terrific animal" of fearful dimensions,

> the chief peculiarity of this horrible thing, was the representation of a Death's Head, which covered nearly the whole surface of its breast, and which was as accurately traced in glaring white, upon the dark ground of the body, as if it had been there carefully designed by an artist. (1248)

When the narrator encounters this monstrous apparition for the second time, he finds it more difficult to succeed "in convincing [himself] that [he] was neither mad nor in a dream" (1247). He calls upon his host to verify his second sighting; the latter, however, "maintained that he saw nothing" (1249). "I was now immeasurably alarmed," Poe's narrator confesses at this point, "for I considered the vision either as an omen of my death, or, worse, as the forerunner of an attack of mania" (1249). While the narrator's host, a man of a scientific turn of mind, identifies the "visionary creature," through the narrator's description, as a specimen of the insect "genus Sphinx," and dismisses it as an optical illusion--a case of "mere misadmeasurement of [the] propinquity" of an actual insect (1250)--the status of the apparitional fly ultimately remains ambiguous; like the legendary sphinx, it is offered by Poe as a creature of inherently enigmatic nature.

Whether one chooses to credit the host's rationalist explanation, or his guest's fears of incipient insanity, the Sphinx fly presents a graphic fictional instance of an immuno-goblin or "monster" born of a mind dis-eased by the imminent--or magnified--prospect of death by cholera. For though it may be sphinx-like in its import as either an optical aberration or as a morbid manufacture of madness, the ghost insect carries an unequivocal and overt significance in relation to communicable diseases such as cholera. That is to say that even before

modern germ theories superseded the pythogenic concept of the spontaneous propagation of disease from miasma or effluvia, flies--now of course recognized as notorious air-borne transmitters of cholera--were already linked to epidemics by dint of their omnipresence in the typical "breeding grounds of disease": cesspools, dung heaps, communal privies, slums (Wohl 88). Cholera, in fact, although often contracted by ingesting food or water infested by the cholera vibrio, "a minute bacillus," "was most often spread by water contaminated by the excreta of cholera victims, or by flies which hatched in or fed upon the diseased excrement" (Wohl 120). It is absolutely appropriate, then, that the spectral fly of Poe's tale should bear the emblazoned crest of the Death's Head, that ghastly memento mori also hallucinated by Brontë's Lucy Snowe.

"The Sphinx" conveys a darkly monitory message: it exposed contemporary readers to the idea that, in a world in which "the very air" was "redolent with death," invisible to the eye, "cholera" was a term to be reckoned with, a buzz-word of haunting and lethal capacity. But the interplay of ghostly anti-bodies and the theme of cholera in nineteenth-century fiction is far more pervasive than the example of a single text may indicate; it is an association forged through an entire literary trope of live burial, as well. Pointing to the work of Poe, amongst others, R. C. Finucane identifies taphephobia--the fear of premature or live burial--as a distinctively Victorian trait and a prominent characteristic of the ghost story (177). One may think again of Villette in this context, for example, with its legendary nun "buried alive" under the Methuselah tree. And yet for all its significance as a conventional gothic motif of the "risen ghost," contemporary

preoccupations with taphephobia also appear irrevocably attributable to the impact of cholera, an illness whose "apparent symptoms" could include

> stomach pains, vomiting, diarrhoea, and total prostration, during which the body turned cold, the pulse became imperceptible, and the skin wizened. During the final stages, the afflicted might well be taken for dead, and gruesome stories circulated of premature burial and the poor victim's anguished attempts to claw free of the coffin. (Wohl 118-19)

Next to actual inoculation against cholera bacilli, shocking stories of the grotesque--like Poe's "Sphinx" or the personal narratives to which Wohl alludes--may have offered the Victorians their only viable alternative: the opportunity to build up the mental resistance necessary to cope with the traumas brought on by epidemic diseases and widespread death.[33]

It is also epidemic disease which is seen to produce a spectral anti-body of sorts in Bleak House (1853); indeed, "'haunting' is perhaps the adjective that best describes [Dickens's] novel," one recent reader suggests.[34] Critics have often commented on Esther Summerson's spectral aspect in the text, noting that she eventually "becomes," in effect, the ghostly embodiment of Lady Morbury's dying curse on the Dedlock family, when, in Chapter 36, she is arrested by the sound of her own "echoing footsteps" along "the Ghost's Walk." It is there that Lady Dedlock confesses to Esther the tale of her disgraced past, and it is there that Dickens's heroine suddenly realizes "that there was a dreadful truth in the legend of the Ghost's Walk; that it was I who was to bring calamity upon the stately house; and that my warning feet were haunting it even then."[35]

A detail which seems to have escaped many discussions of ghostly signs in Bleak House, however, is that Esther's first self-conscious appearance "as a figure of the uncanny, [as] that which was once familiar and which has become estranged" (Briganti 222) comes as a direct result of "the very bad sort of fever" carried by the unfortunate crossing-sweep, Jo, and inadvertently passed along to Charley and then Esther (384). What renders Esther's once-familiar face unrecognizable--as "strange" as an uncanny spectre before which one "start[s] back" in fright, in fact--are precisely the disfiguring traces of a near-fatal contagious disease. "I was very much changed--O very, very much," she laments upon her first glimpse into a mirror after recovery: "At first, my face was so strange to me, that I think I should have put my hands before it and started back, but for the encouragement I have mentioned" (444-45).

Esther's markedly estranged appearance as a survivor of smallpox fever effectively conveys the uncanny essence of the nineteenth-century dis-ease before contagious diseases--and their deadly breeding grounds, such as the "tumbling tenement" of "Tom-all-Alone's."

> As in the ruined human wretch, vermin parasites appear, so these ruined shelters have bred a crowd of foul existence that crawls in and out of gaps in walls and boards; and coils itself to sleep, in maggot numbers, where the rain drips in; and comes and goes, fetching and carrying fever, and sowing more evil in its every footprint than . . . all the fine gentlemen in office . . . shall set right in five hundred years. (197)

Dickens's parallel evocations of the ghostly Esther's "echoing footsteps" in "the Ghost's Walk," and the invisible "footprints" of "foul" fever in the slum tenement are nice indications of the subtle way in which Bleak House figuratively manages to conjure a "spectre" of

communicable disease: the "ghost" of an elusive presence, of an infectious miasma signalled only by the haunting traces it leaves upon ground already trodden.

In Henry James's The Turn of the Screw (1898), on the other hand, it is not the abstract concept of infectious disease which is metaphorically prefigured as a spectral entity, but the ambiguous apparitions of Miss Jessel and Peter Quint themselves which are conversely presented as contaminating, pathogenic agents of a form of communicable disease. Described by James as "hovering prowling blighting presences" (Art of the Novel 175), the ghosts of this short novel "reek with [an] air of Evil" which proves as insidious as that "crowd of foul existence" bred in the fever slum of Tom-all-Alone's. Thus, at Bly, where the Governess presides over her seemingly cherubic charges, Miles and Flora, the advent of the ghosts' appearance is represented as the "outbreak" of a "gross" illness or rash of sorts: "after a lull, the grossness broke out," as the Governess states.[36] With an ever-deepening conviction of the children's infernal and uncanny communion with the spirits--their "secret precocity--or whatever I might call the poison of an influence that I dared but half-phrase" (63)--the Governess comes to regard Miles and Flora as "sick children": "some wistful patient[s] in a children's hospital," whom she, in the role of a "nurse or sister of charity," must work to "cure" (64).

Many critics of James's text have rightly suggested that, as the embodiment of "a general vision of evil" (James, Art of the Novel 176), the ghosts need to be interpreted in the Christian context of sin and sickness: as manifestations of inextricably interrelated conditions of moral and physical pollution or corruption. Nevertheless, the

connections James weaves between spectral phenomena and contagious disease, in particular, are so pointed as to be virtually inescapable. That the "wide overwhelming presence" of the ghosts, which at the end of the story "fill[s] the room like the taste of poison" (88), is a form of noxious pathogen specifically linked to the outbreak of fever is suggested by the fact that, at the crisis of confrontation, both children suddenly succumb to fever fits. Flora becomes so "feverish" after the Governess accuses her of complicit intercourse with the spirit of Miss Jessel that it remains questionable whether her abrupt departure from Bly with Mrs Gross "will dissipate the influence . . . and carry it off," as the Governess predicts, or, conversely, aggravate her condition, perhaps "carrying off" Flora herself (74, 81). Miles, for his part, is indeed "carried off" at the story's conclusion, by what appears to be an exorcistic "dispossession" accompanied by "a sudden fever of his little body" (88, 85). And James proceeds to draw an explicit link between Miles's "fevered face" (87), the face of contagious disease, and that of the ghost figure, when he has the Governess compare the boy's sweaty, pale visage to Quint's "white face of damnation" glaring through the window: "the face that was close to mine," she says of Miles, "was as white as the face against the glass" (85). Images of the ghostly anti-body and the "fevered" body lacking antibodies are here presented as mirror reflections of one another.

The twin outbreaks of ghosts, on the one hand, and of contagion and fever, on the other, points toward an uncanny conjunction that haunts even the substance of James's personal correspondence. It is a conceptual association that lurks, for example, in the language of a

letter the author wrote to the renowned psychical researcher, F. W. H. Myers, in 1898:

> The thing . . . I most wanted not to fail of doing [in The Turn of the Screw] was to give the impression of the communication to the children of the most infernal imaginable evil and danger--the condition, on their part, of being as exposed as we can humanly conceive children to be.[37]

Even for the late nineteenth century, to imagine "the condition" of children "being as exposed as we can humanly imagine children to be" was, axiomatically, to reflect on their exceptional vulnerability to communicable childhood diseases, such as measles and scarlet fever--the latter of which "remained a major killer throughout the century," "carry[ing] off" over one thousand children in the city of London alone as late as 1891.[38] Children's immature immune systems coupled with the lack of vaccinations for diseases today easily preventable accounted for perhaps the most immediate and real form of "exposure" feared by the majority of nineteenth-century parents; and along with a general Christian ethos of moral evil as an expression of illness, it is this contemporary context of infectious disease which can be seen to inform the imagistic texture of James's work.

While in James's story ghosts essentially manifest themselves as poisonous anti-bodies of disease, Melville's Moby-Dick (1851) presents an intriguing instance of the phantom anti-body in its defensive capacity. Melville's text, despite its preoccupations with anatomy, is also very much concerned with the interaction of anti-bodies, not only in the form of a ghost of a whale and a white whale of a ghost, but in the antithetical figures of the "small black [cabin] boy," Pip, and "the great white God," Ahab. Pip, the "crazy loon" who runs about as a shadow of his former self after having been once scared out of his

senses, is thus quite literally represented as a shadowy anti-body of madness: an "idiot boy" whose milder strain of lunacy has the potential to neutralize the more vitriolic malady of the insane Captain Ahab.[39] Near the end of the novel, for example, Pip offers to shadow Ahab as a sort of phantom limb: "do ye but use poor me for your one lost leg," he pleads (525). In response, Ahab, it seems, intuitively senses something akin to a principle of acquired immunity: the possibility that "the one daft with weakness" may successfully inoculate "the one daft with strength" (515). Perverse madman that he is, he then replies to Pip thus:

> Lad, lad, I tell thee thou must not follow Ahab now. The hour is coming when Ahab would not scare thee from him, yet would not have thee by him. There is that in thee, poor lad, which I feel too curing to my malady. Like cures like; and for this hunt, my malady becomes my most desired health. (525)

The catch phrase "like cures like," a maxim of Victorian homeopathy, suggests the more general influence here of an early-nineteenth-century pseudo-science contemporaneous with, but eventually undermined by, the fledgling fields of bacteriology and immunology.[40] All the same, the notion of Pip's immunizing effect as a "phantom limb" provides an especially valuable counter to those more numerous representations of ghostly anti-bodies as the effects of contagious diseases or vice versa--representations, that is, which more emphatically attest to a pervasive dis-ease in the literary imagination.

8. Ibsen's Ghosts and Our Ghosts: A Coda

It's so easy to forget one's own past.

- Henrik Ibsen, Ghosts

Although it is a work that falls beyond the proper purview of this study, it seems appropriate to turn at last to Henrik Ibsen's Ghosts (1881), a play which not only dramatically recapitulates the intimate relationship between spectres and communicable disease in the nineteenth century, but one which also underscores especially well the way in which "The Age of the Antibody" ultimately speaks in a perhaps unexpectedly direct manner to the late-twentieth-century sensibility as well.

In Ibsen's play, ghostly anti-bodies manifest themselves under the guise of that most Victorian of spooks from the past: hereditary disease. As with Brontë's Bertha Mason, Thackeray's George Gaunt, Collins's Mad Monkton, or Braddon's Lady Audley, the "sins of the father" (or mother) are visited upon many fictional characters of the age as insanity. In Ibsen's drama, however, the dead hand of the past extends its legacy in the form of a crippling infectious disease at once mental and physical. For while the dead father in Ghosts, Captain Alving, has left provisions for a "Memorial Home" for orphans to be established in his name, he has left a far more malignant trace flowing in the veins of his son, Oswald, who soon discovers he suffers from syphilis. "There's been something worm-eaten about you since birth," as a physician puts it to the hapless Oswald, who is indeed destined to succumb to a progressive "kind of softening of the brain."[41] Ultimately, Oswald's fate is the syphilitic dementia of general paralysis, a state in which he is left inert, "flaccid," and

"expressionless" (163), staring vacantly into space, and repeatedly entreating his hysterical and terrified mother: "Mother, give me the sun. . . . The sun. The sun. . . . The sun. . . . The sun" (163-64). "Struck down by this ghastly thing, lying there helpless, like an imbecile child," Oswald is left by the dramatist "beyond all hope of recovery" (162).

Ghosts, then, may be taken as an apt emblem of nineteenth-century anti-bodies of dis-ease and defense in that Ibsen's wrathful wraiths are essentially psychobiological demons: the anti-bodies of a disease against which no antibodies exist, against which a body is defenceless, and before which a mind becomes dis-eased. And in this singular work of ghosts, madness, and infectious disease, Ibsen's work alights upon a nerve red and sore in contemporary society. For it evokes, perhaps, through the "ghosts" of a deadly sexually transmitted disease, a sense of our own newly nervous condition in the age of AIDS, the latest epidemic to have prompted something like a twentieth-century version of the Victorian's "horror autotoxicus." For the veritably "oxymoronic" idea of "immunological disease" (Silverstein 215), an illness in which the immune system that should help defend us against diseases instead sabotages itself, involves an element of particularly perverse pathology: an "exceedingly dysteleologic" state of affairs no less difficult for us to accept than it was for our nineteenth-century forebears (Silverstein 160). And although the experts may keep insisting that there is "still no reason for hysteria,"[42] it may be that the rise of what one popular women's magazine has recently declared our "modern mysticism"[43] is also an index of AIDS-related anxiety, of our collective dread of a disease before which, for all our sophisticated

medical technology, we are essentially defenseless. For imaginary anti-body production, it seems is also on the upswing again, and there are at least some indications that the two phenomena are not entirely unrelated. It is, for example, an extended joke about communicable diseases which rapidly empties a crowded elevator in an opening scene of the recent Hollywood movie Ghost (1990), an enormous and unexpected box-office success.

Accompanying this post-industrial interest in the spirit realm, one may note a modern denial of death and mourning analogous to the "prudery [with which] the sexual impulses were [treated] a century ago" (Ariès 579). "The denial of death has gone beyond the bereaved and the expression of mourning," Phillippe Ariès contends. "It has extended to everything that has to do with death, which has become infectious. Mourning or anything resembling it is [today treated] like a contagious disease" (Ariès 580). Thus, the nineteenth century's increased emphasis on the cosmetic preservation of corpses, for instance, has in our time been taken to outrageous new extremes: to the surgical preservation of the aging, never mind dead, body; to video or gravestone images preserving the faces and voices of the departed for posterity; to the ultimate in "life extension" fantasies, procedures such as cryonics, the hi-tech deep-freezing of corpses for thawing and resurrection at some stupendously advanced point in the medical future.

Are changing disease patterns once again finding expression in a dis-eased suppression of death and defensive spectral projections of the psyche? The enigmatic message from the ghosts of our past may be, it's time we asked some bloody antibody.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SPEAKING OF SPIRITS: THE SILENT 'HORRORS' OF THE TURN OF THE SCREW AND "THE YELLOW WALLPAPER" REVISITED

> My values are positively all blanks save so far as an excited horror, a promoted pity, a created expertness . . . proceed to read into them more or less fantastic figures.
>
> - Henry James, The Art of the Novel, 1962

> Madness exists as the delusion that consists in really uttering an unsayable truth in an unspeakable situation.
>
> - David Cooper, The Language of Madness, 1978

> The unconscious is that chapter of my history that is marked by a blank or occupied by a falsehood: it is the censored chapter.
>
> - Jacques Lacan, Écrits, 1977

> "Mind the gap."
>
> - Public Safety Announcement, London Underground

1. The Ghosts of Henry James: A Critical Legacy

Apprehended as imaginary or hallucinatory anti-bodies within the contemporary historical context of communicable disease epidemics, apparitions of the nineteenth century disclose themselves as diaphanous productions of the psyche ineluctably tethered to the realm of the soma. At the same time, however, the metaphorical nature of the anti-body underscores the basic principle of the functioning of the psychoanalytic symptom as a substitute signifier. It is, in fact, clearly the priority of language that Jacques Lacan emphasizes when he remarks that "the psychoanalyzable symptom, whether normal or pathological . . . is

sustained by a structure which is identical to the structure of language. Thus it is that if a symptom can be read, it is because it is already inscribed in a process of writing" (Language of the Self 116, 70n). As opposed to traditional discussions of the uncanny, invariably oriented by Freudian notions of the return of the repressed, Lacan's insights have in recent years prompted a fruitful new awareness of the apparition as a linguistic entity: for revenants are indeed intrinsically "identical to the structure of language" in that both, as Marjorie Garber reminds us,

> stand in the place of something that--perhaps--was once present and is now gone. . . . [W]hat is a ghost? It is a memory trace. It is the sign . . . . [or] concretization of a missing presence, the sign of what is there by not being there. (xiv, 129)[1]

In a literary context, the recent shift toward an emphasis of the figurative relevance of the ghost as an absent signifier has played a particularly prominent role in the ongoing turns of the extraordinary critical debate that has been generated by Henry James's The Turn of the Screw (1898), one of the apparition narratives to which I have already referred, and to which I propose now to return in somewhat finer detail. As I suggested in the last chapter, the central mystery of James's novella revolves around the ambiguous figures of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel, the former servants at Bly, "an old family place in Essex" rather inexplicably deserted by its rightful "Master."[2] As readers of James's tale learn in the narrative frame prefacing the story proper, it is the Master's absolute removal from his country estate which precipitates the Governess's installation as "supreme authority" (5) at Bly. And here, "plump, one afternoon," before she is fairly settled as caretaker of her new wards, Miles and Flora, the unnamed Governess of

James's story, espies the figure of Peter Quint for the first time (15). It is a "collision" which, in the midst of "a confusion of curiosity and dread," immediately kindles her literary imagination: "was there a 'secret' at Bly--a mystery of Udolpho or an insane, an unmentionable relative kept in unsuspected confinement?" (17). Only the first of a whole sequence of ghost sightings, the Governess's initial encounter with the Master's masquerading valet memorably signals the advent of what she terms her "dreadful liability" (25) for seeing spectres--"in strange places and on high places, the top of towers, the roof of houses, the outside of windows, the further edge of pools" (49)--that, apparently, no one else sees. But while Miles and Flora disavow knowledge of the haunting pair, the thick mystery of children's obscure pasts, and particularly, the "intolerable question" of Miles's confounding expulsion from school (57), gradually harden the Governess in her suspicion that the charges she initially rhapsodized as the purest of "Raphael's holy infants" (8) are, in fact, secretly complicit in an infernal congress with the depraved "demon-spirits" she keeps glimpsing (James, Art of the Novel 175).

Now, the critical controversy surrounding James's tale is perhaps almost as well known as the tale itself. On the one hand, psychoanalytic critics, beginning with Edmund Wilson, have traditionally pointed to the ocular manifestations of Quint and Jessel as subjective, hallucinatory symptoms of the Governess's "neurotic case of sex repression" (Wilson 88): as the projections of a "sexual hysteria" arising from the thwarted desires of James's "virginal ingénue" for the handsome, absent Master of Bly (Renner 176, 177). Conversely, proponents of the supernatural, and most recently, perhaps, Peter

Beidler, have sought to affirm the "objective" or veridical reality of the spirits. Noting especially James's recurrent allusions within the text to a paradigm of spiritualistic possession and exorcism--to episodes of apparent verbal visitation by which the ghosts remark themselves even to the obtuse Housekeeper, Mrs Grose--such readers often seek to vindicate the impugned sanity of the Governess by relocating the locus of pathology in the sadly "possessed" children, little victims of a metaphysical sort of Geisteskrankheit.[3] Certainly, as critics such as Norman MacLeod have carefully shown, the ambiguous status of the ghosts is an effect James deliberately sought to accentuate in his revision of the tale for the New York edition.[4] And indeed, it should be noted that, notwithstanding the opposing contentions of the "Freudian" and "anti-Freudian" camps, a significant body of James criticism also more readily appreciates the indeterminacies, tensions, and paradoxes of the text, upholding the validity of both perspectives simultaneously: "there isn't a right way and a wrong way to interpret the tale," as Juliet McMaster concludes, "but rather two ways, which the same reader may enjoy alternately" ("'The Full Image'" 382).[5]

In recent years, however, Shoshana Felman's formidably incisive reading of James's text, entitled "Turning the Screw of Interpretation,"[6] has provided a new twist to the critical dispute over James's ghost story. According to Felman, the materializations of Quint and Jessel have less to do with female hysteria or the phenomena of demonic possession than they do with the uncanny constitutive status of the signifier or letter as such. She observes how "the central plot" of James's text is in fact "organized around a double mystery": the mystery of the ghosts, and the "mystery of the missing content of the

chain of letters which determine the narrative structure of the story" (WM 193, 195). From the manuscript-letter addressed to Douglas at the story's outset, to the Headmaster's cryptic note of Miles's dismissal from school, and the governess's own intercepted letter to the Master, which is eventually revealed to contain "nothing" (86), it is not what these letters say that matters, so much as what they don't say. The missives written and received in the novella

> give rise to each other by means of the very silences, of the very ellipses, that constitute them: the letters are linked to each other only through the very 'holes' in their contents. . . . the whole course of the story is governed by a hole in a letter. (WM 188)

And just as the letters, "through their very silence, point to 'horrors,'" so the ghosts, Felman perceives, are repeatedly characterized as silent "horrors": "Could it not be said then," she asks, "that the ghosts, whatever their horror may consist of, act as a kind of pendant to the missing content of the letters?"

> If the ghosts . . . come to fill in--so to speak--the letters' gaps, or at least to occupy a place homologous to the vacant interior of the letters, could it not be said that the ghosts are in reality nothing other than the letters' content, and that the letters' content could thus itself be nothing other than a ghost-effect? (WM 194)

To consolidate her argument, Felman proceeds to show how James's apparitions are inextricably linked with the activities of reading and writing. The governess, for example, testifies after her initial encounter with Quint: "So I saw him as I see the letters I form on this page" (17). Similarly, the ghost of Miss Jessel, though Felman surprisingly fails to note this, is at one point apprehended by the governess "at the schoolroom table" amongst "pens, ink, and paper," writing a letter (59). And "is it not significant," she asks, "that the

ghosts are consistently associated in the governesses' mind with the novels she has read?"

> Quint's first appearance immediately calls up the memory of two such novels . . . [and] the governess's third encounter with the apparition . . . occurs just after she has sleepily put aside the book she has been reading: through this metonymical . . . connection, the ghost, almost directly, seems to spring out of the pages of the book. (WM 195-96)

"To see ghosts, then, is to read letters," Felman concludes: apparitions in The Turn of the Screw "inextricably attend and suffuse the written word as such" (WM 196-97).[7]

As the title of her essay "Turning the Screw of Interpretation" indicates, Felman develops her theory of James's ghosts as the figurative equivalents of the activities of reading and writing within the larger context of the exegetical enterprise of literary criticism in general. And since it is fair to say that her work on James's novella has hit the contemporary critical scene with as great an impact as she herself notes of Edmund Wilson's famous "Freudian" reading of 1934, I will extend my overview of her argument here to encompass its main thrust. Through a perhaps somewhat overly polarized rehearsal of the critical history I have briefly outlined above, Felman shows how The Turn of the Screw has, in effect, become "the scene of [a] critical debate" which in itself represents a dramatic, compulsive repetition of the conflict dramatized within the text (WM 148). The novella's "uncanny reading effect," as she proceeds to demonstrate, manifests itself in criticism's tendency not only to elucidate James's text, but also to "reproduc[e] it" or "unwittingly participat[e] in it" by means of its unselfconscious repetition of the rhetoric or "main lexical motifs of the text": an interpretive turn which includes,

fascinatingly, accusations and counter-accusations of states of "prepossession" and "hysterical blindness" on the parts of rival "Freudian" and "anti-Freudian" critics (WM 145, 147-48).

Not only does the rhetoric of criticism in this way reenact the sorts of "madness" represented by the text, but the interpretive strategies of the literary critic, Felman maintains, also tend to mirror those of James's own shrewd Governess, who, with her inexorable "chain of . . . logic" (The Turn of the Screw 69), provides a paradigm par excellence of the psychoanalytic literary exegete, in particular. The Governess's perception of ghosts and letters alike, Felman notes, "involve[s] the perception of ambiguous and contradictory signifiers, the perception of double meanings." Her mode of "reading and interpreting those ambiguities, however, reveals itself paradoxically to be an act of reducing and eliminating them": a struggle for the acquisition of a univocal "certainty and clearness about the meaning of what had nonetheless appeared at first to be ambiguous and obscure" (WM 198, 199). In the same way, the object of the traditional "Freudian" critic, such as Edmund Wilson, has been to become, in effect, like the Governess herself, a "master reader"--an interpretive enterprise Felman similarly shows to be firmly predicated upon a sometimes surprisingly crude suppression of ambiguity or contradiction, all in the name of a quest for a "definitive denomination . . . of both truth and meaning" (WM 215, 204).

Moreover, she persuasively contends that the Governess's essentially transferential relationship to young Miles and Flora--the subjects presumed to "know" of "horrors" from which she herself is "barred"--is replicated at another level by the critic's transferential

relationship to the literary text. For like James's Governess, the psychoanalytic reader sets out to decipher and appropriate a "secret" knowledge conceived of as withheld or "located in [an] Other" (WM 201). Much as the governess seeks to force a "confession" from the hapless Miles at the end of James's story, then, so do "Freudian" readers such as Wilson seek to force the "hidden" meanings of a text that, as Douglas flatly puts it in the prologue, "won't tell," at least "not in any literal vulgar way" (3). Indeed, in their very attempts to prove the governess "mad" or "hysterical," Felman argues, psychoanalytic readers in essence repeat the heroine's own attempt to prove her young charges "mad"--a diagnostic gesture that similarly entails an identification of pathology in an Other. To shut out or foreclose "madness" as something situated within an Other (and therefore, by implication, as something external or alien to the Self) is an act of self-exclusion ironically analogous to the condition of self-imposed ignorance assumed by the absent Master of Bly, Felman points out: a condition, in essence, of blindness to the truth. As James's governess, for her part, succinctly avers at one point: "[I] shut my eyes as tight as possible to the truth that what I had to deal with was, revoltingly, against nature" (80). "Now to occupy a blind spot is not only to be blind," Felman reasons, but, "in particular, to be blind to one's own blindness; it is to be unaware of the fact that one occupies a spot within the very blindness one seeks to demystify" (WM 239). In other words, to the extent that madness itself may be defined as a "blindness to meaning," or a "position of non-mastery, error or delusion with respect to the truth" (WM 49, 50), diagnostic readings inescapably entail an element of self-delusion that paradoxically implicates or includes the diagnostician who

would exclude himself or herself from the madness diagnosed in the Other.

In this way, Felman's essay "brilliantly transcends the inadequacies of early Freudian interpretations" of James novella to afford her own readers what has been rightly termed "a superb example of modern criticism at its best" (Gill 315). The Turn of the Screw, she ultimately shows, functions as a "reader-trap" set especially for the "sophisticated" and suspicious analytic reader, who is surreptitiously lured "into . . . believing that there is an outside to the trap" (WM 239), that there actually exists any other possibility but that the masterful critic merely re-dupe-licate, if I may, the governess's own deluded sense of mental "equilibrium" and her repressive attempt to control meaning. James's novella thus proves no mere "amusette to catch those [readers] not easily caught" (Art of the Novel 172), but rather, a monumental Mousetrap of no mean design. Indeed, although Felman herself does not make the analogy, her work on The Turn of the Screw implicitly illustrates its affinity with Shakespeare's Hamlet at various levels: from the intricacies of its mise en abîme narrative structure, to the polysemous richness of its language and the endless ambiguities of its ghosts and "mad" central protagonists, James's tale of a sorely beset "hysterical" governess and her "possessed" charges, like Shakespeare's tragedy of the melancholy-mad prince, affords the ultimate "reading adventure" (Felman, WM 197) of its literary period and genre.

2. Returning to the Ghosts of The Turn of the Screw

"[M]anifestations of a compulsion to repeat," as Freud repeats three times in Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920), "exhibit to a high degree an instinctual character and, when they act in opposition to the pleasure principle, give the appearance of some 'daemonic' force at work" (SE 18: 35). Such a repetition compulsion, "with its hint of possession by some 'daemonic' power" (Freud, SES 18: 36), pervades the telling of The Turn of the Screw, whether in the prominent echo-effect of the characters' discourse;[8] in the governess's indirect reportage of her interminable need to "repeat . . . over and over," "re-enumerate," "recapitulate," and "review" the suspicions she finds so painfully "intolerable" (34-35); or, indeed, in the fundamental design of James's narrative structure, as it is enfigured by the metaphor of the turning screw: "a spiral that consists of a series of repeated circlings in which what turns is indeed bound to re-turn" but never to close (Felman, WM 220-21). Similarly, my own choice to conclude this study with a return to The Turn of the Screw represents, no doubt, a "choice" actually overdetermined by something of that very "daemonic force" that animates James's ghost story; it is as though I am caught, in Felman's terms, in another of the text's uncanny "reading-effects," compelled to play out the force of a narrative will to repeat by readdressing the seductive challenges of that narrative for perhaps the hundred thousandth time.

Still, in thus yielding to the "addressing power" of the text's signs (Felman, WM 31), my conscious purpose, at least, is not repetitive. In essence, I believe that despite the tremendous scope, subtlety, and value of Felman's work on The Turn of the Screw, her

overriding concern with the problem of the madness of interpretation significantly circumscribes her analysis of James's ghosts and their metaphorical relevance. For inasmuch as the spectral figures of Quint and Jessel are inscribed within the text as gaps, or spaces of silence homologous to the "missing content" of letters (Felman, WM 194), it bears emphasizing that they resemble that uncanny realm of the unknown which is the "adulterated" or "censored chapter" of the unconscious itself (Lacan, Écrits 50). Indeed, to the extent that the ghosts also function as fundamentally contradictory signs which prefigure silent and unspeakable "horrors," the spirit-apparitions of The Turn of the Screw quite literally disclose themselves as "unheard of contradictions": as signs in a certain sense analogous, that is, to those designs employed by Charlotte Perkins Gilman as a metaphor of the language of the unconscious in "The Yellow Wallpaper." As such, the great question of the articulation of the ghosts' names in James's novella can be reconceived, not from Felman's perspective as a matter involving the madness of interpretation, but rather, as a phenomenon which also bears exploration from a representational point of view, as a dramatization of the very problem with which Gilman also wrestled in the writing of her tale: namely, the problem of a subjective articulation or direct naming of the truth of the unconscious. From this point of view, the struggles of both the Governess and the children to verbalize the names of Quint and Jessel denote all the complexities of an attempt to sound out the "unheard of" horrors of unsoundness itself--to spell out a form of contra-diction intrinsically resistant to signification. Above all, to reread the ghosts as figures of an unconscious realm which defies direct

utterance may also be to arrive at a new perspective on Miles's "unheard of" death at the story's climactic end.

Moreover, I will argue that James's representation of Quint and Jessel as the metaphors of an unstated or unspeakable "horror" points toward the fundamentally ambiguous interrelationship of speech and silence in The Turn of the Screw. Though they remain mute throughout the story, it is inadequate to characterize the ghosts, as Felman does, as "essentially figures of silence" (WM 193), for their status as metaphors, as figures of speech, problematizes that partial insight at every turn. Rather, as emblems of what Felman in another context terms "the silent speech of the unconscious" (WM 234), James's spectres might more accurately be characterized as figures of silence that turn with speech, in a continual, non-linear intertwining that reinscribes the revolutions of the turning screw, the text's governing metaphor. In one sense, the paradoxically composite nature of the ghosts as figures of both speech and silence may be traced as a process of performative materialization that recalls the scenic realization of the hysterical symptom in Wilkie Collins's Heart and Science: for the ghost of Peter Quint, at any rate, is graphically presented as a sort of silent or latent figure of speech that, grimly and ironically, comes to a dramatic fruition at the end of the story.

Ultimately, however, to the extent that the silent figures of both James's ghosts and Gilman's wallpaper reveal themselves as parts of speech that yet also appear paradoxically apart from speech, they are metaphors of the unconscious that reproblematize the idea I raised earlier, in relation to "The Yellow Wallpaper," of the language of madness (or of the unconscious) as a silent "break" with language. Like

the paralinguistic scrawls on the walls of Gilman's attic nursery, the uncanny silence of James's ghosts signals a phenomenon at once eerily intrinsic and extrinsic to the representational realm of language: it is presented by James as a ghostly silence that, although not articulable in so many words, is yet strangely audible to the Governess in speech and writing. Through means of such an enigma, James manages to press a point left implicit in Gilman's metaphorical deferral of the attempt "to say madness itself." And that is, if madness may indeed be understood as a form of ultimately unspeakable "unheard of contradiction," it is a silent "horror" that haunts the very interstices of language itself--including, most especially, those figures of speech into which it is deferred. Indeed, such an uncanny element of silence can be seen to appear as a constitutive feature of any rhetorical trope. That is to say, rhetorical forms and movements may proved the crucial mediating mechanisms in the problematic relationship between language and the silent "otherness" of the unconscious. In the end, then, my exploration of the interplay of silence and speech will lead me to re-view the ghostly signs and ghastly designs in the works of James and Gilman as emblems of the rhetoric of the unconscious: a strangely silent--and yet familiar--form of speech whose "madness" consists, finally, in the ceaseless "turns" and loco-motions of rhetoric itself.

3. Sounding Unheard of Contradictions: "The Monstrous Utterance of Names"

Perhaps most overtly, the metaphorical nature of the ghosts in The Turn of the Screw is implied even in the governess's most frequent denomination of them as "figures." And as such, the "figures" of Quint and Jessel signify for the Governess an unspecified and unnameable "horror." "What is he?" as she replies to Mrs Grose's initial inquiries about the apparition of Quint: "He's a horror." "A horror?" responds the dubious housekeeper. The Governess struggles to elaborate: "He's--God help me if I know what he is!" (22). Similarly, the late valet's illicit lover, and the Governess's own predecessor at Bly, the infamous Miss Jessel, is described by James's heroine as "a figure of quite as unmistakeable horror and evil: a woman in black, pale and dreadful--with such an air also, and such a face!" (31). As Shoshana Felman suggests, it is perhaps not by virtue of any innate, metaphysical "evil" that the figures of Quint and Jessel appear thus shocking; rather, it is the "economy of contradiction" apparent in their mode of manifestation that generates their capacity "to 'horrify', to scandalize and appal." Like letters, James's ghosts are outrageous in their status as "nobodies" and "nothings":

> Nothing, nobody; no-thing, no-body: marked by the very sign of negation and denial, prefixed by a 'no' which bars them in the very act of calling them up, the ghosts--like the letters--manifest themselves only to negate themselves, but through this self-negation, carry out their own self-affirmation; their mode of being and of self-manifestation is that of their own contradiction. The double scandal implicated by the double reference to the 'horrors' [the noun used by James to qualify] both what the ghosts reveal and what the letters conceal, could thus spring not from any evil inherent as such in the letters and the ghosts, but precisely from their structural[ly] self-contradictory mode of functioning. (WM 194)

Silent, scandalous, and essentially self-contradictory in their "mode of functioning," Quint and Jessel, it could be said, disclose themselves as "unheard of contradictions" in every sense of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's phrase. For through their paradoxically self-negating means of manifestation, the ghostly "nobodies" of James's text recapitulate something of the inconceivable illogic or unreason of the patterns on Gilman's yellow wallpaper, which are likewise figures of "optic horror" that establish themselves tentatively as (de)signs only to "commit suicide" and "destroy themselves in unheard of contradictions" ("YW" 20, 13). For that matter, James's ghosts are also analogous to those "creeping" female figures whom Gilman's narrator believes to inhabit the wallpaper's "dim sub-pattern": "nobodies" quite literally barred in the act of being called up by a "front pattern" that paradoxically "strangles them off" the moment they apparently succeed in "get[ting] through" ("YW" 26, 30).[9] In James's story, then, as in Gilman's hauntingly gothic narrative, the "creeping" or "prowling" figures of "horror" that are ambiguously presented as symptoms of insane hallucination or demonic possession[10] appear marked by outrageous anomalies characteristic of the logic of the dream-work or the unconscious, in which the conceptual categories or relations of negation, contradiction, or antithesis are "unheard of" in the sense that they are, as Freud puts it, "simply disregarded" or ignored.[11]

The parallels between the ghosts whose presence so beclouds all the putative "romance of the nursery and . . . poetry of the schoolroom" in James's text (19) and the "sprawling flamboyant patterns" on the walls of Gilman's "atrocious nursery" ("YW" 13) extend beyond the intractable contradictions similarly evident in their respective modes of

signification. It is due to their status as "unheard of contradictions" that Quint and Jessel, for instance, also appear as traces as apt as the patterned wallpaper to "confuse the eye in following" ("YW" 13): "He turned away," as the bewildered Governess attests, upon her first encounter with Quint, "that was all I knew" (17). In their randomly alternating visible materializations, both near and far, inside and outside, high and low, the trespassing intruders at Bly also evince a certain "everlastin[g]" "impertinence": a "lack of sequence and defiance of the law" that in a sense corresponds to the moral-aesthetic violations or "artistic sin[s]" committed by Gilman's irritatingly unprincipled wallpaper ("YW" 16, 25, 13). And the "vicious influence" of both ghosts and wallpaper is ultimately signalled by way of olfactory as well as ocular channels: by that "peculiar odor" of the "yellow smell" emanating from the nursery wall ("YW" 16, 29), and by that equally peculiar "wide overwhelming" "taste of poison" that appears to "fil[l] the room" with Quint's final manifestation (88). It is in manifold respects, then, that James's "inconceivable" spirit-apparitions appear "hideous enough, and unreliable enough, and infuriating enough" to warrant a comparison to the "torturing" pattern Gilman employs as a metaphor of madness in "The Yellow Wallpaper" ("YW" 25).

It is indeed when they are perceived in the context of "unheard of contradictions" associable with the irrational "horrors" of the unconscious realm that the ghosts of The Turn of the Screw may point toward a new perspective on the question of "all the risk attached," in James's novella, "to sounding [the] horrid note" of the Great Unsaid (46): to the question, that is, of the characters' problematic attempts to articulate the "element of the unnamed and untouched" (46, 50). For

as with "The Yellow Wallpaper," the "unheard of" anomalies presaged by the ghosts can be seen to pose prodigious obstacles to representation--in this case, to verbalization in particular. Indeed, what is manifestly "monstrous" (53) about the prospect of a direct and proper denomination of the ghosts, James's text suggests, is that such a naming of the unnameable entails running the "risk" of participating in the suicidal semiosis of the very "nobody" one attempts to represent: of "destroying" oneself, in other words, in an "economy of contradiction" that, ultimately, can be represented only by being silently enacted or dramatized. How else, indeed, to negotiate that which, in its essence as a silent contra-diction, by definition resists and eludes verbalization? What I am suggesting is that in addition to its sophisticated self-awareness as a text about the madness of interpretation, The Turn of the Screw also deserves to be considered as a text which probes a representational conundrum akin to that confronted by Gilman in "The Yellow Wallpaper." In the end, such an approach invites a reformulation of the question which focalizes Felman's approach to the closure of the novella, leading the reader to ask not "how a child can be killed by the very act [of the governess's] understanding?" (WM 205), but, rather, how a child might be killed by the very act of articulation.

In James's text, the "unheard of" mystery of the ghosts, of all that is "hideous[ly] obscure" at Bly (80), is consistently probed by "soundings" which dualistically--and sometimes ambiguously--signify the activities of either listening and speaking. "What I had said to Mrs Grose was true enough," comments the Governess at one point: "there were in the matter depths and possibilities that I lacked the resolution

to sound" (34). To sound: to speak of, or to assess mentally (and aurally) as by "sounding" the "depths"? Though the Governess's usage is, in this instance, typically indeterminate, James's characters, and most especially the Governess, often seek to "plumb" what is figuratively presented as a dim, subaqueous realm of silent "depths! depths!" (31) by means of "mutual soundings" (78). An attempt to "meet and measure" the "confounding and bottomless" enigma of the ghosts (41, 87), the Governess's recurrent endeavors to "sound" the haunting silences of those about her--whether of the children, Mrs Grose, or the ghosts themselves--enact her desperate bid to gain or retain control over the threatening unknown and unnamed. Conceiving of herself as "strangely at the helm" of a "great drifting ship" (10), the Governess appears as an anxious, if not ancient, mariner who "preternaturally listen[s]," or tries to fathom, as it were, the stillness of the unfathomable "deeps": the meaning of every "deep soundless minute" that may conceal some clue to the latent "horrors" of the ghosts (44).

Arguably, James's Governess proves herself remarkably adept at such nonverbal interpretive "plunge[s]" (80); in the "portentous" fireside silence she shares with Miles after her decisive rupture with Flora, for example, she appears quite accurately to divine the boy's "confession" "just coming": "a day or two" will "really . . . bring it out," she predicts, as though she can already hear the words of his imminent "surrender" welling from the deepest depths (74, 76)--or from "miles and miles away," to borrow a pun of the boy's own (82). It is much rather with the business of sounding out the "horrors" she intuits that the Governess is likely to falter in her "resolution." For it is clear, in fact, as Bruce Fleming observes, that notwithstanding her self-described

"dreadful boldness of mind," the Governess, as much as Mrs Grose, continues to "flounder about in silence" (36) when it comes to the question of articulating her suspicions (Fleming 135). Only too certain, often, about her interpretations, the Governess is decidedly uncertain about representation; despite her increasingly relentless efforts to bring the children to a confession, she herself, in fact, displays a persistent unwillingness or inability to breach her own silence by speaking directly of "the poison of an influence that," as she acknowledges, "I dared but half phrase" (63).

To be sure, the Governess's reticence to "introduce" into her "perfect intercourse" with the children the note of an "element so dire" (47) may be partially attributed to her obvious concerns with tact and decorum, as Fleming suggests (1989). Her "quiet good sense and general high propriety" (15) militate against "any literal, vulgar" telling in a way Douglas can appreciate (3). But if the act of articulation, and the naming of the ghosts, especially, is "such a monumental" question for the Governess, as for the other characters (Fleming 135), perhaps it is because the stakes involved in "represent[ing] something infamous" (53)--something like the "unheard of contradictions" the signifiers "Quint" and "Jessel" stand for--exceed the Governess's own estimation of a "positively ill-bred" moral transgression (Fleming 137), or violation of "instinctive delicacy" (53). Indeed, her account of her struggle to "come to the point" about the ghosts suggests a more profound impasse or blockage; one that in itself reflects an element of that "economy of contradiction" which, to recall Felman's words, structures the ghosts' "very mode of being and of self-manifestation." "At odd moments," the Governess records,

> I shut myself up audibly to rehearse--it was at once a fantastic relief and a renewed despair--the manner in which I might come to the point. I approached it from one side and the other while, in my room, I flung myself about, but I always broke down in the monstrous utterance of names. (53, emphasis added)

Much as Gilman's distraught narrator determining "for the thousandth time" to follow the "pointless pattern" of the wallpaper "to some sort of a conclusion" ("YW" 19), James's Governess seems inexorably stymied in her repeated attempts to "come to the point." Perhaps a trace of the contra-diction that thus eludes utterance is signalled even in the ironic double entendre of her first sentence, "I shut myself up audibly to rehearse," which might be translated in a figurative sense: "I silenced myself to speak." The Governess's statement here effects a division of meaning which issues in this doubled sense as a paradox that neatly replicates the ghosts' mode of self-affirmation through self-negation. Caught up in the inherent contradictions of that which she would name, the Governess is thus also, like the "nobodies" of Quint and Jessel themselves, effectively "barred" in the very act of calling them up, "always [breaking] down in the monstrous utterance of names" (53).

Nonetheless, in her final confrontation with Flora by the lake, the Governess does appear to "come to the point" of "half-phras[ing]," at any rate, the whole of the "poison[ous] . . . influence" constituted by the haunting pair of dead servants. In the form of a question that proleptically anticipates Miles's subsequent query, "Peter Quint--you devil! . . . Where?" (88), the Governess surrenders the name of "the spectre of the most horrible of women" (59): "Where, my pet, is Miss Jessel?" (70). Of this suspenseful utterance she notes in retrospect:

> Much as I had made of the fact that this name had never once, between us, been sounded, the quick smitten glare with which the child's face now received it fairly likened my breach of the silence to the smash of a pane of glass. It added to the interposing cry, as if to stay the blow, that Mrs Grose at the same instant uttered over my violence--the shriek of a creature scared, or rather wounded, which in turn, within a few seconds, was completed by a gasp of my own. I seized my colleague's arm. "She's there! She's there!" (71)

On the most overt level, the naming of the ghost is above all and aptly prefigured as an act of violence," a "blow" that "wound[s]," in the sense that it conveys, of course, an accusation that deeply offends Mrs Grose and Flora. And given the manifestly alienating effect of her words--Flora, for one, never speaks to her tutor again (75)--the Governess's analogy of her breach of silence to the "smash of a pane of glass" is also somewhat ironic. For to the extent that her speech here represents the successful destruction of an invisible barrier of silence--the shattering of that pellucid partition or "haunted pane," which throughout mediates ghosts from ghost-gazers (82)--it presumably portends a breakthrough to the realm of that unnameable knowledge, that "something from which," as the Governess feels, "I was barred" (82). Instead, however, to sound out "Miss Jessel" is only to comprehend a new barrier in language, as the governess is indeed destined to rediscover at the point of Miles's later confession of the "truth": "even then," she perceives, "the very effect that was to have brought him so much nearer was already that of an added separation" (87).[12]

The element of violence and alienation thus associated with the direct naming of the ghosts, however, not only grimly belies the Governess's therapeutic ideal of language as a potential means of communion and cure. It may also be understood to denote the nature of the representational risk inevitably entailed by any attempt to sound

out or "audibly . . . rehears[e]" the silent "horrors" dramatized by James's "unheard of contradictions": the risk, that is, of the violence of misrepresentation. For inasmuch as the spectral no-body of Miss Jessel enfigures the silent speech of the unconscious, she constitutes, to re-echo Derrida, "what by essence cannot be said" ("Cogito" 43). The Governess's proper naming of Miss Jessel is in this sense but a misnaming, an utterance that estranges and transforms its object even in the very act of calling it up. In her essence as an "unheard of contradiction," Miss Jessel is not directly articulable; hence her manifestation at this point as a paradoxical concatenation of elemental antitheses, a fiery conflagration at the water's edge, to which the Governess can merely gesture mutely--"She's there! She's there!"--"with [her] pointing hand" (71-72). "[B]ig as a blazing fire" at the "blank haunted edge" of the "grey pool" (72-73), Miss Jessel burns across the lake as an archetypal symbolization of the infernal and the unconscious: a realm of inexpressible contrarieties that may be pointed toward, but not pronounced.

It is left to Miles, though, to meet the ultimate "articulate challenge" (46) by sounding out, under duress, the whole horror, not only of "Miss Jessel, Miss Jessel!" but of her more malignant male counterpart as well. For at the novella's climactic close, the Governess is "determined to have all [her] proof" of Miles's recognition of "the white face of damnation" at the window (88), and she therefore presses the terrified and reluctant boy to utter the proper names of both the ghosts, first forcing him to spell out his evasive reference to Miss Jessel as "she," and then repeating her tactic with the equally vague "he" Miles attempts:

> "Whom do you mean by 'he'?"
> "Peter Quint--you devil!" His face gave again, round the room, its convulsed supplication. "Where?"
> They are in my ears still, his supreme surrender of the name, and his tribute to my devotion. "What does he matter now, my own?--what will he ever matter? I have you," I launched at the beast, "but he has lost you forever!" (88)

As with the Governess's prior utterance, "Where, my pet, is Miss Jessel?" it is noteworthy that the spectre of Peter Quint, similarly, can be (mis)named by Miles only as a question about an ever-elusive object: "Peter Quint--you devil! . . . Where?" (88).

In her excellent analysis of this confessional scene, Shoshana Felman focuses on the text's "semantic play" with dual senses of the word "grasp," a term that brackets the "beginning and the end of the last chapter . . . as though that word had as its role at once to introduce and to bring to a final conclusion the story's final act" (WM 205-06). While in the opening sentence of Chapter XXIV, the Governess's failure to "grasp" Miles's reaction to her question ("Tell me . . . if . . . you took, you know, my letter" [84]) refers to her powers of comprehension, in the final paragraph of the text, "the grasp" with which she "recovers" the boy after his "supreme surrender" is a usage which transmutes the abstract sense of "grasp" as "understanding" into the concrete sense of "clasping" or "holding." As Felman remarks, James thus "seems to literalize and at the same time ironize" the Governess's act of finally comprehending the boy's "secret" knowledge by realizing it "in the suffocating gesture of a tightly closed embrace" (WM 206-07). In this final chapter, that is, "the entire effort of the Governess," who has aimed throughout at "reading the knowledge of the child," culminates in a violent comprehension ("grasp") of "the meaning the Other is presumed to know"--ultimately, the constitutive aim of any act

of reading (WM 209, 207). "In demanding from the child the whole truth about what he knows," the Governess attempts a definitive closure of the reading process (WM 204), even though that act of closure necessarily entails an obliteration or suppression of part of the truth: "I was," as the Governess puts it at this point, "blind with victory" (87). Coming to a conclusive end by "naming truth and meaning" thus presupposes a "violent gesture of appropriation, a gesture of domination of the Other." Meaning, in effect, ultimately arises as the outcome of a form of epistemological "terrorism" or imperialism (WM 209, 207): a "grasping" desire to, in the Governess's favorite phrase, "get it out of you yet!" (36).

In its interrogative form, moreover, Miles's surrender of the ghost's name, Felman stresses, is a "highly ambiguous and doubly problematic" event:

> If the act of naming does indeed name the final truth, that truth is given not as an answer to the [Governess's] question about meaning ["Whom do you mean by 'he'?"], but as itself a question about its location . . . . The final meaning, therefore, is not an answer, but is itself a question, which also questions its own pursuit. (WM 204)

In view of her incisive appreciation of the way James's text thus resists a "decisive answer" in favor of a deferral of meaning, it is "rather surprising" that Felman, in turn, as one critic notes, "seems to accept unquestioningly that Miles's death is caused by the Governess's suffocating him in her [mental and physical] 'grasp'" (Steig 859).

For as much as Miles's death, on the one hand, appears the result of the Governess's forcible appropriation of meaning, of the "ultimate blind grip of comprehension" signified by her seizure of the "surrendered" name (WM 216), James's richly ambiguous text also invites

us to "grasp" the dynamics of the boy's demise alternately, in the context of a "monstrous utterance" that consumes its speaker in the very self-destructive "economy of contradiction" structuring it. For the progress of Miles's "confession" leading up to his naming of the ghosts is, indeed, marked, in a dramatic and metaphorical sense, by the eruption of an "unheard of contradiction": by the physical torment of a simultaneous burning and drowning that recalls and reenacts the paradoxical manifestation of Miss Jessel, whose "identity" virtually "flare[s] up" out of a "sheet of water" (59, 68) at the moment the Governess attempts to sound her out. As noted in the previous chapter, Miles, like his sister, is taken with "a sudden fever of his little body" (85), as he admits to having burnt the Governess's letter to the Master. But the boy's "fevered face" (87), the heated intensity of his "white rage" and "panting" bewilderment (88) signal a sort of immolation that paradoxically occurs even as he seems to drown in the element of the "deep" silence which he must now attempt to breach by voicing. Under the pressure of a Governess determined to "sound" him, Miles's words surface as from "the bottom of the sea"; figuratively, that is, as from the psychic depths of the unconscious:

> He looked in vague pain all round the room and drew his breath, two or three times over, as if with difficulty. He might have been standing at the bottom of the sea and raising his eyes to some faint green twilight. 'Well--I said things.' (86)

The "unspeakable anxiety" which grips the boy at this point may be understood as the sinking torment of one who struggles to find a way of formulating the truth of the "hideous obscure" as a message comprehensible to consciousness:

> He was soon at some distance from me, still breathing hard and again with the air, though now without anger for it, of being confined against his will. Once more, as he had done before, he looked up at the dim day, as if, of what had hitherto sustained him, nothing was left but an unspeakable anxiety. (87)

And with one final "frantic little shake for air and light," the "glaring," feverish child's paradoxical plunge into the "abyss" culminates in death (88).

It is not so much, then, in his "supreme surrender" of the signifiers "Miss Jessel" or "Peter Quint" that Miles ultimately succeeds in conveying the essential "truth" about the ghosts, as it is that the drama of his burning/drowning end silently names a ghostly contra-diction that must continue to elude verbal articulation. For insofar as it preserves the <u>silence</u> of the unconscious "horror" it performatively enacts, Miles's incarnation of the ghosts' self-contradictory nature presents an essentially "truthful" representation of that horror: there is in this respect, at least, no inherent "contradiction" between the form and content of the child's utterance, between "such a speaker" and his "speech" (87). The performative process by which Miles thus "names" a silent contradiction, tracing as it does the slippage of language into pure act, also begins to illustrate the paradoxical nature of silent acts, in James's novella, as speech acts also.

At the same time, in the same manner as that of the ghosts' semiotic functioning, Miles's representational triumph at the end of <u>The Turn of the Screw</u> is but a deadly pyrrhic victory, a thing of "exquisite pathos" (87). For to participate in the contradictory economy that defines the ghosts' "mode of being and of self-manifestation" is to

attain an affirmation of meaning and truth only upon the predicate of self-negation. As the body of Miles, in its manner of physical death, sounds out the antithetical oppositions united by the ghostly "nobodies," his being is prefixed by the "very sign of negation and denial," the unheard of "no," that irrevocably contradicts them. Unlike the Governess, in other words, who "shuts herself up" in but a figurative contradiction, and merely points with her hand toward the silent "horror," Miles, in his performative utterance, quite literally silences himself to speak--to manifest the truth of an uncanny contra-diction that, ultimately, remains "unheard" though not unexpressed.

As in Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," then, James's novella suggests that the silent and scandalous anomalies of the unconscious may not, after all, find articulation in words as such, but elude direct verbalization. The only way to bespeak such an entity thus entails the "hideous" "risk" (44), or double bind, of either misrepresentation or silencing oneself. This point is indeed ironically thematized within the text, registered at various points in the Governess's own speech about speaking about the spirits. When Mrs Grose early on, for example, asks in reference to Peter Quint, "What's he like?" the governess responds, "I've been dying to tell you. But he's like nobody" (23, emphasis added). Similarly, Flora, firmly resolute in her refusal to breach her silence about the ghosts, addresses her interrogator a "frank look" that (according to the Governess) "virtually said," "I'll be hanged . . . if I'll speak!" (70, emphasis added). In the context of the characters' struggle to represent "monstrous" contra-dictions, such glib cliches assimilate an ominous literalism. James's characters do in

this regard "hang" themselves, damned either way. For the names of the ghosts will only "di[e] away on [the] lips" of those who, like the governess, would (mis)represent "something infamous . . . by pronouncing them" aloud (53). Conversely, Miles himself is destined to "die away" when he closes his lips to embody the truth of what "nobody" is "like." And that the price of thus daring to articulate the inarticulable may be, in the end, life itself is perhaps one of the (no)things Miles is dying to tell us.

4. Giving up the Ghost

In an oft-quoted passage from the preface to the New York edition of The Turn of the Screw, James describes the spectral apparitions of Quint and Jessel as "inconceivable figures in an action--and 'The Turn of the Screw' was an action, desperately, or it was nothing" (Art of the Novel 174). Perhaps both at once, James's ghost story is fundamentally a narrative of "nobody" (22) and "nothing" (86), of "inconceivable figures" of silence that yet turn with speech in an intriguing rhetorical action that spirals, like the double helix of a screw, in accordance with the crafty narrative design of a coy master. "Agents in fact" (James, Art of the Novel 175), James's ghosts not only look like "actor[s]," with their assumed costumes (24) and "grand" theatrical "attitudes" (59), but Peter Quint, at least, that quint-essential figure of silence, can also be seen to act himself out, in a manner of speaking, by performatively materializing, at the end of James's tale, in a figure of speech.

To the extent that silence, in James's novella, constitutes an element habitually "sounded"--and in that sense, audibly interpretable,

if not articulable--the supposition that the dumb silence of the ghosts may also, paradoxically, prefigure the possibility of sound and speech seems plausible enough. But this notion is also significantly reinforced in the Governess's important third encounter with the apparition of Quint, midway through the tale in Chapter IX. A meeting that consists of a "long gaze at . . . close quarters" on "the great turn of the staircase" at Bly (41, 40), the episode is recollected by the Governess with especial perspicuity, despite her claim to be at a loss for words:

> It was the dead silence of our long gaze at such close quarters that gave the whole horror, huge as it was, its only note of the unnatural. If I had met a murderer in such a place and at such an hour we still at least would have spoken. Something would have passed, in life, between us; if nothing had passed, one of us would have moved . . . . I can't express what followed save by saying that the silence itself--which was indeed in a manner an attestation of my strength--became the element into which I saw the figure disappear; in which I definitely saw it turn. (41, emphasis added)

Not a word or gesture "passes" here, to break the "dead silence" the Governess finds so distinctly "unnatural," and yet, at the very moment she begins to struggle with the inexpressible, her representation of the ghost turning and disappearing into the element of "silence itself" becomes rather paradoxically telling. For what "turns" and "disappears" into silence but a figure of speech? The inference arises from the subtle differential implied in the Governess's observation: in order to be able to perceive a "figure" to "disappear" into silence, it must somehow be distinct from that silence in the first place. What James seems to present readers with in this instance, I would suggest, is the paradoxical manifestation of Peter Quint as a mute or silent figure of speech: a latent speech act, as it were.

The intimation of the ghost as a sort of forthcoming figure of speech established, quite literally, at a "turning" point midway through the text can be seen to come to an articulation of sorts during the final climactic scene of Miles's "surrender," which focuses, of course, precisely upon a long-awaited speech act. Indeed, the ghost of Peter Quint is at this point realized as a figure of speech through a form of "semantic play" somewhat similar to that noted by Felman with regard to the double meanings of the Governess's mighty "grasp" in the final chapter. But this rhetorical phenomenon becomes apparent only when one considers the scene of Miles's confession not from the perspective of the Governess's lust for "possession" of truth and meaning, but instead, from the viewpoint of the boy's "dispossession" of that awful truth. To the extent that he is presented as a victim of demonic possession, that is, James's expelled "bad" boy "carr[ies] a bad name" (13) that must, in its turn, be expelled. And in his enunciation of that "bad name," he of course realizes to the letter the Governess's implicit demand throughout the story by literally "giving up the ghost" of the Other--of Quint, who, apparently, dissipates after his identity is thus spelled out, leaving "but the quiet day" beyond the window (88). But Miles's subsequent death in the wake of that "supreme surrender of the name" also ironizes the cliche "to give up the ghost," by tragically repeating it in a figurative sense of giving up one's <u>own</u> ghost, i.e., expiring. His act of dying, that is, has the curious effect of materializing the spirit (or significance) of his dispossession ("I will give up the ghost") which issues and confronts the reader as a deed. One could say that the words of a dead metaphor are here paradoxically animated and resurrected by being made flesh, or "incorpsed," to borrow a term from

Margaret Ferguson, in a dead body.[13] Moreover, this scene of suffocation by the "mother" presents a performance of a figure which recalls the hysterical literalization of "the suffocation of the mother" in Collins's Heart and Science, inasmuch as it likewise entails a realization of a verbal cliche, or of the "symptom" of the ghost, in a figure of speech that is ultimately reconstituted by the reader. In this way, at the end of The Turn of the Screw, the spirit of Peter Quint is indeed "sounded out" in a figure of speech that "turns" in silence, and ultimately "disappears" into the stillness of a "quiet day."

To view the performative materialization of Quint as a figure of speech in slightly different terms, but still within a paradigm of spiritualistic dispossession, the boy's confession evinces that most animistic and mythical conception of the "symptom" as a "magic thing-word": the oracular sign which produces its meaning in a concrete form, or "performs what it announces." As Eugen Baer elaborates:

> The oracular symptom is a self-fulfilling prophecy, a saying (phari) which produces . . . itself as a thing, as a world. It works with only one form of meaning-production which is tautology: [that is] to autolegein, to say the same in the other. (Medical Semiotics 59)

Tautology, indeed, would seem to sum up the mode of meaning production most integral to The Turn of the Screw as a whole, and to Miles's demise, in particular, which comes as a final, grimly ironic form of repetition or "double talk":[14] a trope that, in effect, succeeds in saying the same in an other by enacting in the self(-same way) the giving up of the ghost of the Other.

5. The Silent Figures of James and Gilman

In my earlier discussion of "The Yellow Wallpaper," I argued that Charlotte Perkins Gilman effectively defers the representation of madness into a visual trope, because, as a form of paralinguistic or pictographic "delirious discourse," the silent speech of the unconscious constitutes to some extent a "break" with language. In The Turn of the Screw, similarly, the "unheard of contradictions" presaged by the ghosts are also, in part, visually and metaphorically prefigured in the unspeakable agon of Miles's burning/drowning death. As metaphors of the contra-diction of the unconscious, however, James's silent "horrors" invite a re-examination of the question of the relationship between madness and language. For not only are the ghosts of The Turn of the Screw, as Felman has shown, in fundamental respects homologous with letters, but James's novella, by resisting or blurring tactical oppositions between "conditions of sound and of stillness" (52), also presents readers with an uncanny double paradox: if a ghost may be given up in the form of a figure of speech that turns in silence, so, James's text likewise suggests, ghosts may mark their absent presences as figures of silence that turn in the element of speech. James's mute apparitions, that is to say, occupy a radically ambiguous position with respect to speech and language: like Miles's before the "haunted pane" of the window, it is perhaps ultimately indeterminate as to whether they are "shut in or shut out" of the realm of representation (82). What James's novella at any rate seems to intimate is that if the ghosts, on the one hand, do indeed signify a form of "unheard of contradiction" that eludes--and thus extends beyond or exists apart from--verbalization, then they also portend a silence that pervades

representation by means of the very forms and movements of rhetoric itself. In this way, what the figures of both James and Gilman may ultimately signal is not only their relevance as emblems of the rhetoric of the unconscious, but also their authors' uncanny insights, indeed, to that "madness of rhetoric" best exemplified, in this study, by Jane Austen's "Love and Freindship."

That The Turn of the Screw works to erase and unsettle the "sharp division" or "absolute distinction" that we tend to like to draw between the realms of speech and silence (Fleming 142, 135) is evident not only in the text's paradoxical realization of Peter Quint as a silent figure of speech, but also in the characters' oft-noted reliance upon forms of tacit communication, a mode of silent communion frequently presented as a form of "virtual" speech (70). With regard to the ghosts, in particular, however, it is the phenomenon by which the "unheard of" sounds itself in language that I now wish to emphasize. For as the Governess's narrative recurrently registers, that distinctly "unnatural" "dead silence" or "intense hush" (41, 16) which characteristically marks the presences of Quint and Jessel signals an uncannily audible absence of sound. The apparitions prove the harbingers of a silence which, though not directly articulable through words, as we have seen, is yet strangely present in them. The Governess claims, for example, that she can actually "hear" the "unheard of" when she is engaged in the process of writing:

> I can hear again, as I write, the intense hush in which the sounds of evening dropped. The rooks stopped cawing in the golden sky and the friendly hour lost for the unspeakable minute all its voice. (16, emphasis added)

An "unspeakable," aphasic moment in time, the "intense hush" that here denotes the initial advent of Quint is a ghostly silence that fundamentally inhabits the governess's written words, one that she listens to even while tracing the characters on her page. But moreover, as she later suggests, the haunting "hush" of the ghosts is one that also suffuses spoken discourse:

> After these secret scenes I chattered more than ever, going on volubly enough till one of our prodigious palpable hushes occurred--I can call them nothing else--the strange dizzy lift or swim . . . into a stillness, a pause of all life, that had nothing to do with the more or less noise we at the moment might be engaged in making and that I could hear through any intensified mirth or quickened recitation or louder strum of the piano. Then it was that the others, the outsiders, were there. (53, emphasis added)

The "prodigious palpable hushes" that the governess might otherwise call ghostly "no-things," and that represent the essence of the "unheard of," thus sound themselves through surface speech and sounds, as an alien "otherness" emanating from the interior of discourse. Foreigners, "outsiders," the ghosts mark a silence extrinsic to language, and in this sense "unspeakable." Nevertheless, insofar as these silent figures permeate rather than "break" with language, they are also intrinsic to it. "Outsiders" who speak from the inside, James's ghosts open up a space of silent contra-diction within diction itself.

As silent figures thus at once strangely intrinsic and extrinsic to language, the ghosts of Miss Jessel and Peter Quint also clearly recall the mute geometric designs of Gilman's yellow wallpaper, which, as we saw earlier, partook simultaneously of language and image to create a pictographic form of "paralanguage." And in either case, the "unheard of contradictions" of both James and Gilman actually disclose their rhetorical status as "figures" in the orthodox sense. For a similar

paradox is also discernible in the very form of the rhetorical figure itself. On the one hand, rhetorical tropes, figures of speech involving a turn or a change of sense, always encompass an element of intralinguistic silence, like James's ghosts. Gerard Genette thus describes the figure as "a gap between sign and meaning, as the inner space of language" (49). The "gap" or "space" enclosed by the figure of rhetoric is one of tacit, unspoken, or implicit meanings, a more or less plurivalent realm of semantic ambiguity which, by definition, requires an act of "translation" and verbalization to make its meaning explicit.[15] In this respect, it might be said that every rhetorical configuration embodies a sort of "reserve of silence": just as the "unheard of" silence of the ghosts sounds through surface speech in The Turn of the Screw, or just as a "quiet" and "formless sort of figure" gradually becomes perceptible through the surface text of the yellow wallpaper's "conspicuous front design" ("YW" 18, 26), so the system of tropes comprising the rhetoric of a text sounds "the very silence of literary language as such" (Felman, WM 238).

From another perspective, however, the very form of the rhetorical figure might also be said to embody a supralinguistic quality, inasmuch as it entails a unique element of silent spatiality or design. Above all, figures always involve the replacement or substitution of one term for another, creating, in effect, a conceptual space of palimpsestic depth "delimited by the two lines of the present signifier and the absent signifier" (Genette 49).[16] Rhetorical form thus entails a spatial dimension of language which may be mentally perceived in language, or even, perhaps, visually prefigured by it, as with Gilman's metaphor of the wallpaper's "dim sub-pattern" ("YW" 26), but never

objectively captured as such in the written or spoken signifier itself. Words, that is, do not come in three-dimensional shapes. Rhetorical figures thereby signal an imagistic depth or form which may be "sounded" (or apprehended) in language but not spelled out as such by surface signifiers alone. At once silent parts of speech, and silent forms apart from speech, rhetorical figures are themselves uncanny, existing within language as "a discourse that is radically other" (Felman, WM 89).[17]

James's spectral "outsiders" or Gilman's visual picto-language of delirium, then, are like rhetorical figures in that they are entities at once a part of language, or common to speech, and yet also uncommonly apart from it, strangely "other." In sounding their presence by virtue of a silence, a latent absence, James's ghosts, in particular, manifest themselves in precisely the same way as figures of speech, which are also always made present by their subjectively perceived absent terms.[18] The iconosemiotic "figures" on the walls of Gilman's nursery, on the other hand, disclose their rhetoricity primarily as forms comprised at once of the temporality of the linguistic sign and the spatiality of iconic design. If the figures of Quint and Jessel, as well as the yellow wallpaper, may be taken to represent the "unheard of contradictions" of the unconscious, therefore, then they represent that silent speech of the unconscious in specifically rhetorical terms. For rhetorical devices such as metaphor and metonymy, homologous, after all, with the mechanisms of the unconscious, incarnate in their very functioning the paradoxes and antitheses of that realm of contra-diction, and its "unheard of" representational strategies.

It is, moreover, on the basis of their status as rhetorical figures, as figures, indeed, of the contra-diction of the unconscious or the "rhetoric of madness," that the silent "horrors" of James and Gilman also necessarily resurrect the notion of the "madness of rhetoric": in these uncanny figures of speech, the dual questions of the representation of madness and the madness of interpretation may be seen to meet--in a manner of speaking. As metaphors of the rhetoric of the unconscious, that is, both the ghosts that haunt Bly and the wallpaper that haunts Gilman's protagonist simultaneously function as devices that effect or underscore the dynamic or performative nature of rhetoric, which, was we have seen in Chapter Three, is above all about the "madness" of meaning's continual movement, transformation, and subversion. As Shoshana Felman persuasively contends, the study of rhetoric does not entail the study of static forms, but rather, of "movements produced by the interaction of forces in language" (25):

> The system of tropes and figures is not a simple system of classifications, of distinctions and oppositions: it is also the movement that displaces the very factors of stability supporting the classification system. It is the system of substitution, shift, and perturbation of the foundations upon which that system rests. (WM 27)

The "logic of rhetoric," innately contradictory, "is not merely one of construction," of the production of form and meaning, it is also "one of deconstruction--specifically, of self-deconstruction" (WM 27). Albeit in slightly different ways, the "figures" representing the rhetoric of the unconscious in the respective narratives of James and Gilman are equally bound up in such a loco-motion language and sense, vehicles of a "madness of rhetoric" running parallel, indeed, to that traced earlier in the juvenile "nonsense" of Austen's "Love and Freindship."

In The Turn of the Screw, for instance, the figures of Quint and Jessel function in their rhetorical capacity as central catalysts of the very "turns" of sense, the ambiguous and ubiquitous permutations of meanings, that contribute to readerly perceptions of the "madness" of Henry James's text. "It is, indeed, quite striking that the ghosts' appearances so very often have to do--in all senses of the word--with turns," as Felman observes, "[and] what, in fact, is the significance of a turn, if not that of a change . . . of direction, the modification of an orientation, that is, both a displacement and a choice of sense, of meaning?" (WM 221-22). More specifically, presented as they are by James as both figures of speech "turning" in silence, and as figures of silence "turning" in speech, the ghosts may be said to emblematize, even as they also effect, the text's continual revolution of literal and figural meanings, its polysemous play with what is absent and "unheard of" within its own language. Mechanisms that, in effect, keep meaning on the move, the ghosts are, to recall the words of the New York preface, "inconceivable figures in an action" indeed: "agents in fact" of that infinite helixical "action" that is the turning of the screw, itself a duplicitous figure, which, as Felman observes, "establishes an ironical equivalence between direction and deviation, between a turn of sense and a turn of madness, between the turn of an interpretation and the turning point beyond which interpretation becomes delirious" (WM 223).

And from the "turns" of the ghostly figures in The Turn of the Screw, we may return, at last, to the "endless convolutions" of a delirious pattern in Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" ("YW" 25). Like the silent figures of the ghosts, the hideous designs on Gilman's

wallpaper are also preeminently "figures in an action": an action which, in this case, can now be conceived of as a visualization of the "language of madness," the speech of the unconscious, as, precisely, the madness of rhetoric in its performatively active essence. For the wallpaper, which Gilman's narrator notably attempts to decipher in terms of a rhetoric, "a principle of design" ("YW" 20), is a paralanguage of "optic horror" largely because it is a text animated by the very principle of movement: a dynamic "confusion" of visual forms and figures that appear almost as though the chorea-graphs of a frantic St. Vitus's dance. Less a geometry than a form of physics, the "sprawling outlines" on the wall "run off" and "rush off in headlong plunges of equal distraction," something like Austen's speeding vehicles, in all directions: "up and down in isolated columns," "diagonally . . . in great slanting waves," and "horizontally, too" ("YW" 20). Consequently, to "follow that pattern about by the hour," as Gilman's protagonist does, is to trace the locomotion of a "running madness" as taxing as anything Austen's aerobically inspired heroines pursue: "it is as good as gymnastics, I assure you" ("YW" 19). Moreover, inasmuch as the pattern "changes as the light changes" ("YW" 25), it is also the scene of continuous metamorphoses, its "interminable grotesques" appearing as a moving phantasmagoria of shapes that the narrator can neither "keep count of" nor analyze with anything but momentary certitude ("YW" 20, 28). Both the shadowy procession of hieroglyphic figures and the running, "suicidal" lines and angles of Gilman's wallpaper can thus be seen to offer a lucid enfiguration of the rhetoric of the unconscious as a madness of rhetoric: a loco-motion of (de)signs that effect only "the active incompletion of a meaning which

ceaselessly transforms itself, [and] offers itself but to be misunderstood, misapprehended" (Felman, WM 54) by Gilman's increasingly exhausted and exasperated narrator--as well as by readers of her text.

The parallels between James's novella and the maddening picto-graphic script on Gilman's wallpaper thus seem, in the end, as striking from the point of view of interpreting madness as they do in regard to the problem of representing it. For ultimately, whether we speak of the "endless convolutions" of the yellow wallpaper, or of the infinite revolutions of the (re)turning Jamesian screw, both works feature designedly "pointless pattern[s]" that we cannot "will" to "some sort of conclusion" without confronting new contradictions of our own making ("YW" 19). Both constitute texts composed of unpredictable "turns" or "uncertain curves" ("YW" 13), texts with tricky designs upon would-be interpreters. Gilman's narrator, after all, may be understood to speak as well for readers of The Turn of the Screw as for herself when she observes of the wallpaper: "You think you have mastered it, but, just as you get well underway in following, it turns a back somersault and there you are" (25). So "there you are," indeed, when faced with the "mad" text of Henry James, inevitably foiled by a narrative coil destined to screw you, one way or another, into mis-reading.

While the works of both Gilman and James, then, each focus comprehensively on the insurmountable "risks" inherent in attempting to represent the discourse of the unconscious, a form of essentially silent contra-diction that escapes direct articulation, neither ultimately casts madness as a transcendant or absolute "Other," a silence irrevocably "beyond" speech or symbolization. Instead, the very

rhetorical figures they employ to write around the question of the unrepresentable themselves effect a dynamic play of forces and "turns" of sense that actively undercut meaning, displace and double sense, resist interpretation, and, in this way, paradoxically herald, as Shoshana Felman suggest, a sort of "madness that speaks, a madness that is acted out in language, but whose role no speaking subject can assume" (WM 252). Through the movements of rhetoric, events in language not necessarily co-extensive with cognition, the contra-diction of the unconscious leaves its trace, in the literary text, as in my own critical text.

To elaborate upon an aspect of this latter point briefly, I can, perhaps, do no better than to turn to a passage in Henry James's preface to the New York edition of The Golden Bowl, in which the "Master" addresses the issue of the author's rhetorical designs upon his readers while weighing the merits of pictorial illustrations accompanying texts:

> That one should, as an author, reduce one's reader, "artistically" inclined, to such a state of hallucination by the images one has evoked as doesn't permit him to rest till he has noted or recorded them, set up some semblance of them in his own other medium, by his own other art--nothing could better consort than that, I naturally allow, with the desire or pretension to cast a literary spell. (Art of the Novel 332)

By way of ambiguous ghosts that figure as absent letters of the unconscious, by way of the mystery of what it does not spell out, The Turn of the Screw casts, in effect, a "literary spell" on its readers, readers whose own expository "illustrations" testify to the haunting rhetorical force of the text's (de)signs even as they attempt to dispel that uncanny grip by discovering its recondite meanings. The literary texts's masterful enchantment of the reader then issues, as James

suggests, in a re-presentation of those very (de)signs, by the critic who "set[s] up some semblance of them in his own other medium, by his own other art." In this sense, my interpretation of James's ghosts becomes the trace of an "other art" that perpetuates, by way of a symptomatic reproduction, something of the very forms of madness dramatized in the text. For by "read[ing] into" the "blank" values of James's ghostly "nothings" and "nobodies" "more or less fantastic figures" (James, Art of the Novel 177) of the unconscious, I have, in a sense, been "reduce[d]" "to such a state of hallucination" as parallels that to which James's Governess is often perceived to succumb; I have, in a sense, been "possessed," like Miles and Flora, by the seductive power of ghostly figures that beckon, that invite one to fill their silent sense-less spaces with a discourse of demystification: a critical rhetoric that is itself not only the effect of an author's desire to "cast a . . . spell" through letters, but an effect of a subjective desire, also, for knowledge of the unspeakable and the unknown. That, at any rate, is the spirit in which I understand my own "words, words, words" about the silent horrors of nineteenth-century fiction, at the present time.

EPILOGUE

DIA-GNOSIS

> "What a dreadful turn, to be sure, Miss! Where on earth do you see anything?"
>
> - Henry James, The Turn of the Screw, 1898

> "Was it a monition or a monomania? What if I am wrong after all? What if this chain of evidence which I have constructed link by link is woven out of my own folly? . . . Oh, my God, if it should be in myself all this time that the misery lies; if--"
>
> - Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Lady Audley's Secret, 1862

Through the preceding chapters, I have presented readings of manifestations of madness and nervous dis-ease, which, as with the frightfully disjointed scrawls of Gilman's yellow wallpaper, for example, very often present themselves as ruthlessly unreadable signs, signs designed to resist interpretation. I have attempted to provide coherent commentaries on prose works about madness, which, albeit to degrees that do vary markedly between a text such as He Knew He Was Right and one such as "Love and Freindship," also resist comprehension and logical synthesis in terms of their narrative totality, as signifying chains comprised of missing and unconnected links, or censored sites of narrative repression or amnesia--textual gaps and elisions I have noted in relation to the fiction of Henry James and Wilkie Collins, as well as Jane Austen.

For me, the interpretive hurdles posed by these nineteenth-century texts of madness have been frustratingly compounded, at times, by the fact that I have found myself writing, as well as reading, against the

force of a considerable resistance: a sort of psychic undertow or countercurrent that I am inclined to attribute, if only for lack of a better reason, to the inherent doubleness of my critical position as a semiotician of Victorian representations of the psyche. For as a reader, my relationship to the fictional work of madness has simultaneously assumed the opposed roles of enlightened diagnostician--a subject with answers and explanations--and of unenlightened patient--a subject constituted by questions addressed to the (textual) Other. To this extent, the overall shape and substance of the foregoing study represent yet another figuration of somewhat scandalous contradiction and confusion: a symptom of my own fractured readerly identity, and of my efforts to negotiate that ambivalence. By way of recapitulating the primary aims and findings of this thesis, therefore, I would like briefly to reconsider the "madness" of my own interpretive method.

That the readings of the individual texts considered by my successive chapters have at all times presumed a diagnostic approach is evident in the fact that their related arguments routinely proceed from a preliminary identification and location of some form of madness, not just "in" the text, generally, but "in" such literary figures as, I have maintained, are employed by nineteenth-century writers to represent the unconscious and the various forms of disorder to which it is subject. It is, indeed, as a diagnostician who brings to bear upon the literary text the insights of psychoanalyst or medical semiologist that I have recognized such figures as Gilman's wallpaper, Austen's stage coaches, or the spectral apparitions of James and others, as symptoms: as the metaphorical sites of delirium, linguistic loco-motion, nervous dis-ease, or unconscious contradiction. Similarly, I have, in effect,

"diagnosed" the actual figures of characters such as Louis Trevelyan in He Knew He Was Right and the women of Collins's Heart and Science as "melancholic" or "hysterical," and have analyzed figural "wounds" of the one and the literal strangulation associated with the other as symbolizations of those morbid conditions.

The diagnostic technique thus apparent in my recurrent attempts to denominate and trace pathology to a specific locus within the textual body, to concretize madness as a phenomenon embodied by certain literary figures, metaphorical or otherwise, implicitly postulates a theoretical ideal of the reader as an authority over the text: of the literary critic as a masterful semiotician, empowered by a pseudo-clinical knowledge that buttresses her position of interpretive command. By first situating the symptom of madness "in" a literary figure, and then proceeding to attempt, in some way, to figure it out--to explain what it might mean and how it seems to (dys)function in a metapsychological, or historical, or rhetorical context--my study has, in other words, tacitly pursued the same goal of achieving a "cognitive control" over pathology that nineteenth-century medical semiologists sought to establish by way of their elaborate taxonomies of symptoms; or, as Shoshana Felman has shown, that twentieth-century psychoanalytic readers have traditionally sought to attain over such ambiguous and "mad" texts as The Turn of the Screw. Indeed, to the extent that this thesis provides an expository analysis of the semiotic phenomenon of madness, it to some degree triumphs over the irrationality of that phenomenon, and in the process not only consolidates the meaning of the literary text(s) in question, but implicitly bears witness to the intactness of my own wits, as well.

In this regard, one of the motives subtending my "diagnostic" study of signs and symptoms appears as a compulsion to conquer rationally a subjective dis-ease of madness, a latent anxiety of disorder or unreason which may be psychologically mitigated or subjugated by the objectification and comprehension of madness in an Other. In the end, that is, my endeavor to designate and decipher the foreign non-sense of literary forms of madness can be seen to represent a defensive response similar to that which I diagnosed in Chapter Six as a neurotic symptom of the nineteenth century's collective dread of contagious diseases. And this piece of irony--the ironical truth of the subjective dis-ease underlying my own critical discourse--begins to point up precisely my paradoxically simultaneous implication here as a nervous "patient" as well as an authoritative diagnostician of semiotic dimensions of madness.

This dual aspect of my role as a reader may be better underscored by recalling Shoshana Felman's contention, in Writing and Madness, that readers typically adopt the role of analysand (or patient) in relation to the literary text by virtue of their transference onto the text as "the subject presumed to know," the subject endowed with the "authority and prestige" of a special knowledge to which they are blind (WM 179). For notwithstanding any overtly expository designs upon the text, my essentially interrogative desire to discover the truth of the text--to discover, in particular, what it knows about madness--signals an inversion of the diagnostic paradigm outlined above, insofar as it implies literature's position as "master" of the reader: an Other perceived as the supreme locus of "hidden" sense and significance, now, rather than of pathology or error. Just as the detective consciousness

of Robert Audley in Lady Audley's Secret is drawn on irresistibly by the ambiguous and secret (hi)story of the heroine's madness, "beckon[ed] onward . . . on the dark road" of a mystery by a "horrible suspicion" that the childishly innocent Lady Audley, like the cherubic children of The Turn of the Screw, knows something he does not (256-57), so have I inquired into the fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's contemporaries, lured on by the tantalizing prospect that the texts of Trollope, James, Gilman, and others might yield to me something of the "secret" knowledge of madness that, I suspect, they conceal.

At the same time, then, that I have undertaken to provide meaningful interpretations of the enigmatic manifestations of madness in my texts, I have also solicited my literary works for answers to the question of madness, much as a patient seeks out the help of an analyst. The coexistence of my contradictory roles as a reader--the subject occupying the analyst's chair? or the subject occupying the analyst's couch?--renders the oxymoronic madness of my critical position a point as ambiguous as that of the "hereditary" madness of Braddon's Lady Audley herself. Or, conversely, within the context of the same novel, it is as nebulous as the sanity of that anti-heroine's arch nemesis, Robert Audley: a shrewd reader of criminal pathology whose own mental equilibrium is called into question over the course of Braddon's narrative. "[W]e are sometimes forced," as this amateur sleuth and eventual nervous "hypochondriac" concedes, "into the very position we have most avoided" (119).

If I have in some sense similarly assumed "the very position" that, as a diagnostician of literary madness, I wished most to avoid, then my theoretical implication as a patient of the text of madness manifests

itself through the "madness" of my interpretation: a "madness" that is, ultimately, evident even through my execution of the very constituent aim of this project as a whole--that is, its diagnostic pursuit of the "signs and tokens" of literary madness. For my subversion as a masterful semiotician of the unconscious is perhaps no way better underscored than by the simple fact that the literary symptom of madness is, after all, apprehensible only as a representation, of which absence is indeed the precondition. In other words, to the extent that the fictional metaphors and figures I have identified as symptoms themselves constitute merely substitute modifiers which "stand for" madness, madness itself is a phenomenon perpetually *in absentia*. Inevitably, the language of literature re-places the object of madness, which, present only by proxy, is always, it seems, already "somewhere else": "we are unable to locate it, read it," as Felman writes, "except where it already has escaped." Any study such as this, which attempts a placement of madness, a location of its "conceptual center" thus "encounters only the decentralizing energy of its *displacement*": "The answer here can but disseminate the question" (*WM* 55, 54). In this way, my "answers" here, my strategic designation of the rhetorical figure as a symptom, invariably "locates" but a counterfeit facsimile of the thing I really seek, the ever-unattainable "golden doubloon" of madness itself. As with the exasperated Governess of James's novella, my every act of pointing out a figure that signifies madness--there! or there!--pinpoints not a factual presence, but a *ghost*: an uncanny trace of madness that reduces certainty of the pointing hand to the status of a doubtful question--"where?"--and thus implies the possibility of subjective hallucination or delusion.

Ultimately, then, my readings do not so much discover the _locus_ of madness in literary signs as they evince a consuming desire to run, quite literally, _after the fact_ of madness: to chase the elusive object of my study, or "run mad" as absurdly as Austen's Laura and Sophia, in pursuit of madness, of a signifier which may be traced through language, deferred from sign to sign, but never "grasped" as such "in" it or by it. My essentially illusory _mis_placement--or erroneous misdiagnosis--of madness "in" literary figures from which it has already escaped not only undermines, then, the notion of the literary semiotician as an authority in control of meaning and disorder; it also reinforces a related point to which I have had occasion to recur frequently throughout the course of this study: namely, the interpreter's tendency to find herself actively figuring _in_ the madness she is in the process of figuring out. A semiotic analysis of literary forms of madness entails the reader's surreptitious rhetorical participation in, and reproduction of, the very forms and symptoms of madness which he or she may set out to decipher as "objective" features of the text. For, as we have seen in relation to texts such as "Love and Freindship," _The Turn of the Screw_, or Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," nineteenth-century narratives of madness are designed not only to thwart or foil would-be readers; they also effectively induce aspiring interpreters to involve themselves actively, through language, in the non-sense they depict and thematize. Whether by luring the inquisitive reader into making "imprudent connections," into promulgating logical arguments upon the "hallucinatory" foundation of signs, or into otherwise "running mad" after their "secret" knowledge, such fictional works stimulate an often unselfconscious replication of a form of "madness" in the rhetoric of literary

criticism--including, of course, my own. To the degree that readers are thus invariably caught up in the "madness of rhetoric," as Felman calls it, they also discover themselves taken in as the dupes of "pointless"--masterfully "pointless"--stories: such is the agency of the letter in literature and the unconscious.

The fundamental critical proposition to emerge from this study, then, and from this review of my contradictory stance in relation to the literature of madness, in particular, is that the diagnostic act of interpreting signs of literary madness represents an ultimately untenable tactic of analytic objectification; a dis-eased gesture of self-exclusion, which is, however, efficiently counteracted by the literary text itself: by the power that it exerts over the reader as a vital, active body of language--not a passive object of critical intervention--and as a body of ambiguous silences that addresses itself irresistibly to our conscious and unconscious desires for knowledge of the unknown and Other. Inasmuch as the semiotic dimensions of representation and interpretation thus involve, above all, the dynamic encounter between the mutual agencies of reader and text, the diagnosis of madness becomes a sort of two-way street--or, better yet, an intersection at which the reader comprehends the madness of literature, and literature comprehends the madness of the reader--and especially, of the reader's ingenious drive to "reduce" the unreadable, as Felman suggests, "to the readable, to interpret it as if it were of the same order as the readable" (WM 187). And perhaps this dialogical process may be taken, in the end, as a reminder of the latent sense of "diagnosis." For "it is noteworthy," as Harley Shands observes, "that when we look at the derivation of the term 'diagnosis', breaking it into

'dia' and 'gnosis', we find the meaning 'dyadic knowing' in an investigative togetherness": diagnostic knowledge is the produce of "consensual conference," a "function of discussion" (15). This is, ultimately, the sense in which I conceive of the spirit of the present study: as an instructive misreading which attempts to dia-gnose or know madness <u>together with</u> literature; as the symptom of an ongoing and uncertain dialogue--or dia-logos--between my reading self and my written Other.

ENDNOTES

Chapter One

[1] Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Lady Audley's Secret, ed. and intro. David Skilton (Oxford: OUP, 1987) 287, 298.

[2] Kathryn Vance Staiano, for example, contends that this line of argument "needlessly removes the symptom from the realm of the communicative act" (Interpreting Signs 5). See also Staiano, "A Semiotic Definition of Illness," 1979.

[3] The largely obscure phenomenon of translation or conversion between sign orders informs the metaphysical analogy structuring this study. The problem is discussed by Freud in "Symptoms, Inhibitions, and Anxiety" (1926), among other places. See also Mahoney 1982; David-Menard 1989, 1-63; and, for an analysis of the problem from perspectives of psychosomatic medicine, Von Uexkull 1982, and Staiano 1986 and 1979.

[4] See Writing and Madness: Literature/Philosophy/Psychoanalysis, trans. Martha Noel Evans and the author, with the assistance of Brian Massumi (1985). Hereafter cited parenthetically as WM.

[5] John Bell, editor's intro., Aretaeus on the Causes and Signs of Acute Diseases and Schill, Outlines of a Pathological Semeiology (Philadelphia: 1841) 10.

[6] As Janet Browne notes in her "Darwin and the Face of Madness" (1985), this was the sort of excessive claim that Darwin was to refute in his 1872 Expression of the Emotions. However, in doing so, he "went against the flow," in Browne's words, of his medical contemporaries (160). See also Sander Gilman, Seeing the Insane 1982.

[7] "Leçon d'ouverture," Progrès Médical 10 (1882): 336. Qtd. by Jan Goldstein 1991, 153. Notably, Charcot's highly imagistic--indeed, excessively histrionic--approach to the study of hysteria marks a departure from a purely indexical conception of the symptom. For in his attention to the phenomenon of "neuromimesis," as he called it, the modes by which hysteria essentially simulated forms of neurological disease such as paralysis, Charcot initiated a new awareness of the symptom's function as an iconic sign: a sign based on a relationship of similarity to the object it designates, the way photographs (the latest medium for "objective" psychiatric diagnoses in Charcot's time) resemble their referents (see Szasz 112). Nonetheless, Charcot adhered to the notion of the causal determination of the hysterical symptom in his perpetual search for an elusive organic lesion to account for the disorder. For further criticism of Charcot and his work, see Goldstein 1991 and 1987; Ruth Harris, editor's introduction to Charcot's Clinical Lectures 1991; Wiesenthal, "Seduction," 1991; and Sadoff, 1992.

[8] First published in German in 1836. The English edition to which I refer appeared in 1841. See Eich (1986) for a fuller discussion of nineteenth-century German semiology.

[9] It is interesting to note that Schill anticipates Barthes's distinction between symptoms and signs, and the physician's pivotal role in the transformation of the one into the other: "only medical tact," he avers, the judicious assembling of the various component "characters" of a disease based on "close observation and well-instructed experience, . . . can convert [the] symptom into a sign" (11).

[10] See Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, Studies on Hysteria, vol. 2 of The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, trans. and ed. James Strachey et al. (London: Hogarth, 1955) 179. Further references to Freud's works are taken from this edition, hereafter cited parenthetically by volume and page number as SE.

[11] See, for example, Ricoeur 1970, Wilden 1980, and, for an excellent feminist assessment, Grosz 1990.

[12] The first to assert that the theory of the unconscious most substantially developed by Freud in The Interpretation of Dreams (1900) is conceived largely in terms of linguistic metaphors and structures, Lacan argues that the "constitutive role of the signifier in the status that Freud from the first assigned to the unconscious" remained implicit (and unrecognized) in his work only because the "formalizations of linguistics were not available to Freud at the time of the Traumdeutung (Écrits 162).

[13] See Chapter Three, note #8, below.

[14] See Chapter Seven, footnote #6, below.

[15] See, for example, Foucault 1961, Ehrenreich and English 1973, Scull 1979 and 1989, Jordanova 1981, Doerner 1981, Digby 1985, Showalter 1985, Smith-Rosenberg 1985, Goldstein, Console 1987.

[16] It is interesting to note that Freud's discussions of this issue, in "Neurosis and Psychosis" (1924) and "The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis" (1924), characteristically seek to distinguish between these two conditions by stressing above all the analogies and similarities of the mechanisms involved. In the latter essay, for example, he is led to conclude: "Thus we see that both in neurosis and psychosis there comes into consideration the question not only of a loss of reality but also of a substitute for reality" (SE 19: 187).

[17] See Dain (1964) and Goldstein, Console (1987) on this latter point.

[18] See, for example, Sander Gilman's discussion of the collaborative essay by Dickens and William Henry Wills, "A Curious Dance round a Curious Tree," which appeared in Household Words in 1852 (Disease and Representation 81-88).

[19] As Jenny Bourne Taylor notes, in England alone, the decade of the 1840s witnessed the founding of The Journal of Psychological Medicine and Mental Pathology, The Asylum Journal, and The Journal of Mental Science (250n). In America, the same decade also saw the

establishment of the first U.S. psychiatric journal, The American Journal of Psychiatry (1844).

[20] "The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether," in The Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe, ed. Thomas Ollive Mabbott (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1978) 1019. Subsequent references are to this edition.

[21] To borrow a prominent phrase from L. Forbes Winslow (1898).

[22] Moby-Dick, or The Whale, ed. Luther S. Mansfield and Howard P. Vincent (New York: Hendricks House, 1962) 427, 432. Subsequent references are to this edition.

[23] See, for instance, Hill-Rigney 1978, Gilbert and Gubar 1979, Showalter 1985, Faas 1988, and Bourne Taylor 1988.

Chapter Two

[1] Gilman's own nervous breakdown occurred during the period 1885-1887, just after the birth of her daughter, Kate, and is graphically described in her autobiography, The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1935; rpt. 1972) 90-106. Although partially recovered by 1890, when she was "finally free" of an equally unhappy marriage and unsuccessful "Rest Cure" treatment by S. Weir Mitchell, Gilman considered herself mentally "crippled" for life by her nervous breakdown, and bemoaned the fact that, as she felt, "the powerful mind I had to begin with had . . . broken at twenty-four" (98). See also Mary A. Hill, Charlotte Perkins Gilman: The Making of a Radical Feminist (1980) 146-53.

[2] Playing on the grammatical and literal senses of the word "figure," Jacobus writes: "'Figure' also means face, and face implies a speaking voice. In this sense, figure becomes the trace of a bodily presence without which it would be impossible to read 'The Yellow Wallpaper' as a first-person narrative, or even as a displaced form of autobiography" (247). But if I understand her argument correctly, her thesis of a double "figuration" in which the narrator constitutes both a grammatical figure of chiasmus and a literal "bodily presence" still does not explain how we are to account for the paradoxical coherency of the "speaking voice."

[3] In doing so, I do not intend to undermine in any way the obvious feminist relevance of Gilman's story. Indeed, I perceive my work as part of the movement in recent Gilman studies which seeks to examine the contemporary status of "The Yellow Wallpaper" as a quintessential "woman's text" within the feminist canon. In this respect, I would situate my efforts in the present essay alongside those of Susan L. Langer, in her "Feminist Criticism, 'The Yellow Wallpaper,' and the Politics of Color in America," Feminist Studies 15.3 (Fall, 1989): 415-41, even though Langer's incisive study of the text's "political unconsciousness" (428) discloses its narrow ideological and racial

biases, while my own reading is preoccupied with a more universal aspect of its treatment of language and madness. As Langer's article challenges the story's status as a "universal woman's text" (423), that is, so my essay implicitly calls into question its status as exclusively a woman's text.

[4] Dictionnaire universel de médecine (French trans., Paris, 1746-48) Vol. 3, 977, qtd. in Foucault 99-100. See also John Haslam, Observations on Madness and Melancholy (London: 1809) 4.

[5] Since there is "no established formula for processing psychotic experience," Evelyn Keitel notes in Reading Psychoses, modern authors of the "psychopathography genre" necessarily seek "novel ways of communicat[ing] it" (5). However, the question she poses as "central" to the twentieth-century "psychopathography genre" is applicable to a much wider range of literature, including "The Yellow Wallpaper": "how can a literary text overcome certain specific limits of verbalization [introduced by the experience of madness], while at the same time allowing for a psychotic experience to be communicated?" (3).

[6] Treischler, it should be noted, identifies such linguistic characteristics as a "stereotypical feature of women's language" (66).

[7] As her modern biographer, Mary Hill, demonstrates, all aspects of Gilman's life and work were touched by her fervent and devout, if iconoclastic, "religious ardor" (111). Noting her subject's relation to Harriet Beecher Stowe, Hill describes Gilman as something of a self-styled female Jeremiah who was "proud of her Beecher flair for preaching," delighted in teaching Sunday School, and showed in literary tastes a marked penchant for inspirational favorites such as Thomas Carlyle and Christina Rossetti (Hill 108, 110-11).

[8] Anthony Wilden, System and Structure, 2nd ed. (1980) 446 and 458, makes a similar point with regard to Lacan's linguistic conceits.

[9] Jacobus is one of the few critics to discuss this neglected latter aspect of the story; see especially pp. 235-36, 241.

[10] It should be noted that Lacan expounds his concept of the Language Barrier in a specifically clinical context, perhaps as the culminating point of the analytic experience when the patient has been brought to an acceptance of the ultimate truth of his or her mortality or "being for death." Nevertheless, Lacan's obscure and multivalent structural metaphor of the Language Barrier does appear to bear some similarity to Derrida's more general conception of language as a sort of barrier or defense against the silence of madness. See The Language of the Self 45, 80-81, 151. See also Eugen Bäer, Semiotic Approaches to Psychotherapy (1975) 6-8, 19-58.

Chapter Three

[1] Jane Austen, "Love and Freindship," in The Works of Jane Austen, ed. R. W. Chapman, vol. 6 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1954) 100-01. All subsequent references to the text are taken from this edition and cited by page number. Following the lead of Chapman and others, I have retained Austen's idiosyncratic spelling and capitalization.

[2] For the publication history of Austen's juvenilia, see Brian Southam, "Juvenilia," in The Jane Austen Companion, ed. J. David Grey (1986) 244-55.

[3] On the complexities of the "necessarily self-contradictory form" of parody or burlesque, see George Levine, "Northanger Abbey: From Parody to Novel," in his The Realistic Imagination (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1981) 61-80. "Parody," he notes, "implies respect and affection for what it must dismiss"; ambivalence is a precondition of the form (69).

[4] Silverman suggests, in particular, that a careful distinction be made between the three signifying sets based on principles of similarity and contiguity: condensation and displacement, metaphor and metonymy, and paradigm and syntagm. The first set she aligns with the primary process and the last set with secondary logic. See Silverman 87-125.

[5] The distinction is Shoshana Felman's, following Freud. In Writing and Madness, Felman shrewdly compares the relationship between a literary work's thematic statements about madness ("the rhetoric of madness") and its rhetorical enactment of a kind of madness ("the madness of rhetoric") to the "differently centred" components of the Freudian dreamwork, the manifest "dream content" as opposed to the latent "dream thoughts" (see Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, SE 4: 277). Citing Freud's observation that the "dream content" and the "dream thoughts" "are presented to us like two versions of the same subject matter in two different languages" (SE 4: 277). Felman contends that "thematics and rhetoric are also two articulations of the same text in two different languages" (96). For while "only a theme can exist in the mode of presence and consciousness," the rhetorical action of a text, pervading thematic content and yet "differently centred" from it, "function[s] according to a different logic, that of the unconscious" (or of the "dream thoughts") (WM 95, 89). Her performatively dynamic conception of rhetoric is like the dream-work Freud describes in that "it does not think, calculate, or judge in any way at all; it restricts itself to giving things a new form" (96).

[6] Metonymy, as various semioticians have pointed out, is always profoundly interrelated with the workings of metaphor. However much one tendency may prevail in a given style, metonymy, "the exploitation of conceptual contiguity," and metaphor, "the exploitation of conceptual similarity" (Silverman 111), "cannot . . . be actually separated from each other" (Wilden; in Lacan, Language of the Self 246). This is the presupposition underlying the work of Martin, who suggests that "literary language" may too neatly be "divided . . . into metaphor and metonymy" (80).

[7] Juliet McMaster, personal communication, November 2, 1991.

[8] Lacanian psychoanalysis, that is, most closely associates the workings of metonymy with the continuous force or energy of unconscious desire, a phenomenon of perpetual yearning, born of the experience of an archaic lack, and played out in the realm of symbolic articulation, in an infinite and only partially satisfactory chain of symbolic substitutions and displacements away from desire's unconscious point of origin. This definition draws upon various sources; see, for example, Alan Sheridan's translator's note in Écrits (viii), or Elizabeth Grosz, Jacques Lacan (1990): "Desire . . . is based on a chain of substitution whereby the first (lost) object of desire generates a potentially infinite chain of (only partially satisfactory) substitutes" (100). More fully, David Stewart comments: "Desire results from the child's experience of lack following separation from [the] mother. . . . One becomes further alienated from [one's] true desire as it is successively replaced by a series of signifiers . . . according to the principles of metaphor and metonymy" (22). And Silverman adds:

> Because . . . originary desires are permanently blocked, they are not capable of real gratification; instead, they initiate a series of displacements which continue throughout the entire existence of the subject and structure that subject's psychic reality. All consciously held desires derive, through a long chain of displacements, from those that organize the unconscious. . . . [D]esire is in effect nothing more than a series of metaphors and metonymies, displacements away from an unconscious point of origin in which one term replaces another which it either resembles or adjoins, before being subjected to a similar fate. (77, 115)

[9] Susan Gubar, "Sane Jane and the Critics," Novel 8 (1975): 246-259.

[10] Felman, WM 135. Felman is referring here to Lacan's infamous style, but her description is just as fitting for Austen's "Love and Freindship."

[11] Laura's raving "mad speech" also reflects, of course, an element of deliberate stylistic caricature that is impossible to overlook. A parody of an entrenched dramatic convention, it not only signals a "take off of Ophelia, even to being for much of its length in iambic pentameter" (McMaster, "Teaching" 145); but in terms of both its style and situation it yet more closely recuperates Sheridan's parody of heroines' "mad speeches" in The Critic. Though too long to cite here, Tilburina's distracted speech in The Critic reflects much the same imagery and fragmented, metonymic style as Laura's ravings. I discuss the latter passage in more detail in my "Representation and Experimentation in the Major Comedies of Richard Brinsley Sheridan" (1992).

[12] Austen establishes the theme of characters' misalliances in the first installment of Laura's adventures, when the heroine blandly announces her mother's origin as "the natural Daughter of a Scotch Peer

by an Italian Opera-girl" (77). Virtually from that point onward, "imprudent connections" between characters of dissimilar age or social status appear to become infectious, including not only the quasi-marriage of Laura and Edward, but also the unions of Sophia and Augustus (87); old Aunt Phillippa and her "young and illiterate Fortune hunter" (86); the heiress Janetta and the "unprincipled fortune-hunt[ing]" M'Kenzie (97); old Sir Edward and his young bride (109); as well as all the parental relations of Sophia, Gustavus, and Philander. Indeed, the only instance of a mutually "suited"union within the story is that contracted between Edward's sensible sister, Augusta, and Graham, the rejected suitor of Janetta (109).

[13] See Juliet McMaster, "Teaching" 145, on the latent neatness in the nonsense and "mere craziness" of this scene.

[14] Which has, once again, surreptitiously displaced the isolated country "cottage" in which we are earlier led to believe Sophia expires (100).

[15] See Walton Litz, "Jane Austen: The Juvenilia," in Jane Austen's Beginnings 3.

Chapter Four

[1] Editor's introduction, He Knew He Was Right (Oxford; New York: Oxford UP, 1985) xiv. Subsequent references to the text are taken from this edition and will be parenthetically cited by page number. A version of this chapter has been submitted for publication to the Dickens Studies Annual.

[2] See, for example, Stanley Jackson, Melancholia and Depression (1986) 384.

[3] Alternately aligned by Esquirol with the intellect, but by followers such as Etienne Georget with the faculty of the will. See Goldstein, Console 177.

[4] Hence the British alienist, Forbes Winslow: "Melancholics are often monomaniacs, that is to say, insane upon one subject. The mind is absorbed by one predominating idea to the exclusion of all else" (Winslow 46).

[5] Burton defines the overriding passion of such a species of melancholy "to be a certain suspicion which the Lover hath of the party he chiefly loveth, lest he or she should be enamoured of another: or any eager desire to enjoy some beauty alone, to have it proper to himself only: a fear or doubt, lest any foreigner should participate or share with him in his love" (821). Whereas species of head, body, and windy melancholy are organically defined, the forms of disorder described in the third part of Burton's book, Love-Melancholy, Jealous Melancholy, and Religious Melancholy, are based on emotional or psychological distinctions.

[6] My thanks to Juliet McMaster for pointing out the connection between Trollope's landscape imagery and the colors of love melancholy, and for referring me to Shakespeare's play.

[7] In iconographic terms, Dürer's Melancholia (1514), which depicts a pair of scales balanced directly above the head of a drooping cherub, comes to mind, for example.

[8] See "Trollope's Metonymies," Nineteenth-Century Fiction 37.2 (1982): 272-92. As his title indicates, Riffaterre's main concern is with the larger question of Trollope's use of metonymy in general, and particularly, with its function and effect in the context of Trollopian realism.

[9] Aunt Stanbury's words cited here actually refer to Camilla French's "bandbox," but since elder sister Arabella clearly sustains the larger "edifice" of the two, I feel justified in making the substitution.

[10] See also Kristeva, In the Beginning Was Love (1987). "Christ's passion brings into play . . . primitive layers of the psyche; it . . . reveals a fundamental depression (a narcissistic wound or reversed hatred) that conditions access to human language" (43).

[11] Incidentally, the arid hilltop of Casalunga furnishes an appropriate site for Trevelyan's supreme surrender of the son, his own Golgotha, as it were. For as Georges Mounin observes of the Hebrew term: "Golgotha designates perhaps no more than a rounded hill, cleared of trees, of a sort commonly found on the shores of the Mediterranean and which are often called 'Bald Hill'" (130).

[12] I allude in particular to Holbein's 1519 diptych, "Christ as the Man of Sorrows" and "The Virgin as the Mater Dolorosa," briefly discussed by Kristeva in her chapter, "Holbein's Dead Christ," in Black Sun 106-38.

[13] See the editor's note, "Mourning and Melancholia," SE 14: 253.

[14] In Mad Humanity (London: 1898), Forbes Winslow offers the following observation on mind-body influence in melancholy, a virtual text-book description of Trevelyan's case itself:

> [The] whole symptoms [of melancholics are] depression, suspicion, suicidal tendencies, and a general mistrust of those near and dear to them, with frequent ideas of persecution. This is accompanied by one or more delusions. The bodily health of the patient frequently gives way in consequence of the continued anxiety and restlessness, and many sleepless and agitated nights. (46-47)

[15] According to Maudsley, this was a preeminent sign of forms of masculine "insanity of jealousy." "An insanely jealous husband might plead excuse for doubting the fidelity of his wife," he states, but "[a] curious proof that the delusion is not the belief of his whole mind, but

something which at bottom he believes but partly," is that he does not take legal steps "to discard his wife, as a sane husband might be expected to do." Instead, he "pesters her with reproaches for her sin, lectures on its enormity, appeals to her conscience, and [makes] importunate entreaties to confess." "His keenest grievance seems to be," Maudsley concludes, "that she will not make a clean breast of it; if only she would confess he would forgive her and say no more, he protests" (Pathology of Mind 326).

[16] For passages pertaining to the respective "perversity" of these characters, see, for example, ch. 22, 186; ch. 13, 118; and ch. 20, 191.

[17] "One should not forget," as Kristeva remarks, "that a whole ascetic, martyrizing, and sacrificial Christian tradition has magnified the victimized aspect of [Christ's] offering by eroticizing both pain and suffering, physical as well as mental, as much as possible" (Black Sun 131).

[18] On the close connections between this genre and the tradition of melancholy, see Bridget Gellert Lyons, Voices of Melancholy (1971) 44.

[19] According to Burton, Hippocrates, "in his book of Melancholy," compared burning coal to the melancholy humor; see Anatomy 152.

[20] Kristeva paraphrases the dynamics of identification at stake in melancholy patients thus: "'I love that object', is what that person seems to say about the lost object, 'but even more so I hate it; because I love it, and in order not to lose it, I imbed it in myself; but because I hate it, that other within myself is a bad self, I am bad, I am nonexistent, I shall kill myself'" (Black Sun 11).

[21] It may well be that Trollope's gradual insights to the abidingly and inherently aggressive underside of Trevelyan's sorrow account for the apparent loss of narratorial sympathy--particularly, the narrator's astonishingly "hard words" in the moment after Trevelyan's death (ch. 22, 928)--to which critics such as Simon Gatrell have called attention.

[22] See also Kristeva, "On the Melancholy Imaginary" 107-08.

[23] Trollope's interest in the quantitative aspects of language is readily manifest in his Autobiography: language, he asserts at one point, "should be as ready and efficient a conductor of the mind of the writer to the mind of the reader as is the electric spark which passes from one battery to [another] battery." See An Autobiography, ed. Michael Sadleir and Frederick Page, intro. by P. D. Edwards (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980) 235.

[24] It should be noted here that, as opposed to Freud's concept of a neurotic melancholy complex, Kristeva focuses upon a potentially psychotic modality of sorrow that is "the most archaic expression of a narcissistic wound, unable to be symbolized or named" because it occurs at a stage of psychosexual development precisely prior to language acquisition ("Melancholy Imaginary" 106-07) and the emergence of a

distinct and separate self (Black Sun 182-83). Overly simplified, Kristeva's melancholy "wound" consists of a form of "impossible mourning" for the "real object" or maternal "Thing" inevitably lost at the point of the child's induction into the paternal realm of symbolic substitutions. It arises, she speculates, as a result of a sort of pathologic double disavowal: a denial or suspension of the negation of (maternal) object loss necessary for "every 'normal' speaker" to take the artifice of signs seriously (Black Sun 43-44). While Kristeva stresses that both the neurotic melancholic and the psychotic "narcissistic depressive" share a "common experience of object loss and of a modification of signifying bonds" (Black Sun 10), the latter is distinguished on the basis that his pathology originates at a point logically anterior to the establishment of libidinal object relations, and does not hide an aggression against the lost object: "For this type of narcissistic depressive, sorrow is in reality his only object; more exactly, it constitutes a substitute object to which he clings, cultivating it and cherishing it, for lack of any other" ("Melancholy Imaginary" 106-07).

[25] In "The Curse of Words in He Knew He Was Right, Rowland McMaster has similarly examined "the rift between language and reality" in Trollope's novel (197). The characters' fascination with preformed linguistic and aesthetic constructs, he shows, works to supplant or "displace reality" and effectively bar the expression of inner convictions, "authentic beliefs and feelings" (198, 202). However, where McMaster is concerned to demonstrate "a general linguistic malaise, extreme in the Trevelyans but evident in many other characters" as well (200-01), my focus falls more exclusively on Trevelyan's linguistic regression and its relation to melancholic disorders.

[26] In this regard, the final scene of Trevelyan's acquittal of Emily comes as something of a dramatically intensified replay of a proleptic moment, early in the quarrel, when "it was almost on [Trevelyan's] tongue to beg her pardon, to acknowledge that he had made a mistake"--"almost," but not quite (53).

[27] This is quite the opposite of the "terroristic status" assigned to psychoanalytic exegesis in the work of Shoshana Felman (WM 233). It should be noted, though, that in Writing and Madness Felman speaks specifically of classical "psychoanalytic interpretation as it undertakes to provide an 'explanation' or an 'explication' of the literary text" (228); whereas Kristeva, of course, speaks from a clinical perspective.

Chapter Five

[1] Wilkie Collins, Heart and Science, in The Works of Wilkie Collins, vol. 25 (New York: Peter Fenelon Collier, n.d.). Subsequent references are taken from this edition and will be cited parenthetically by page number. A version of this chapter is forthcoming in Nineteenth-Century Visions, ed. R. C. Terry (AMS, 1992).

[2] See Mary A. Brazier, A History of Neurophysiology (1988) 170.

[3] Kenneth Robinson, Wilkie Collins (1951) 302. Similar views are voiced in the contemporary reviews of the novel, gathered in Norman Page, Wilkie Collins: The Critical Heritage (1974) 212-17.

[4] The term is taken from Sander Gilman, Seeing the Insane (1982) xii.

[5] Qtd. in Elaine Showalter, The Female Malady (1985) 130.

[6] See Sander Gilman, Disease and Representation (1988) 19.

[7] Qtd. in Veith, Hysteria: The History of a Disease (1965) 7-8.

[8] See Ruth Amossy, "Toward a Rhetoric of the Stage: The Scenic Realization of Verbal Clichés," Poetics Today 23 (1981): 49-63. Collins's play with this convention deserves further investigation. Indeed, the careful reader of Heart and Science will note the novel's self-conscious preoccupation with cliché, a theme in its own right. It is relevant, in this context, too, that Mrs Galilee describes her subsequent mental breakdown in terms of a proverbial cliché, "It's the last hair that breaks the camel's back" (475).

[9] See Breuer and Freud, SE 2: 232. On the characteristic care which Collins took with names, see Sue Lonoff, Wilkie Collins and His Victorian Readers (1982) 130ff.

[10] Dr. M. L. Holbrook, qtd. in Mary Poovey, Uneven Developments (1988) 35.

[11] Sue Lonoff observes that "when traced back to their sources, the most seemingly casual allusions prove to bear upon [Collins's] stories in a way that is little short of remarkable" (136), yet she dismisses Heart and Science to "deserved obscurity" (77).

[12] See Mary Williams, "A Study of Hysteria in Women," Journal of Analytic Psychology 1.2 (1956): 179. For the relevance of another important myth to the history of hysteria, see Laurie Layton Schapira, The Cassandra Complex (1988). A non-Jungian outline of the symbiotic phase between mother and daughter, and its conflicts, are provided by Jane Flax, "The Conflict between Nurturance and Autonomy in Mother-Daughter Relationships and within Feminism," Women and Mental Health, eds., Marjorie Bayes and Elizabeth Howell (1981) 51-69.

[13] Pierre Janet, qtd. by Ilza Vieth, Hysteria: The History of a Disease (1965) ix.

Chapter Six

[1] See Terry Castle, "Phantasmagoria" Critical Inquiry 15.1 (1988): 26-61. Castle illustrates how early phantasmagoria shows, imported to England from France by 1801-02, though "developed as mock exercises in scientific demystification," actually served to heighten the "supernatural effect" of the "fantomes artificiels" they produced, enforcing on audiences "a peculiar kind of split consciousness" as to the "reality" of the images before them (30, 39, 49). "Even as it supposedly explained apparitions away," she writes, "the spectral technology of phantasmagoria mysteriously re-created the emotional aura of the supernatural," for "clever illusionists were careful never to reveal exactly how their own bizarre, sometimes frightening apparitions were produced" (30). For a thorough discussion of materialization seances in the context of nineteenth-century spiritualism, see Owen, The Darkened Room, 1989.

[2] See, for example, J.-M. Charcot, "Spiritualism and Hysteria," Lecture XVI in his Clinical Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System, ed. and intro. Ruth Harris (1991) 198-206. L. Forbes Winslow's highly polemical treatise, Spiritualistic Madness (1877), is reviewed by Owen, The Darkened Room 156-67.

[3] See The Anatomy of Melancholy, ed. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (1955) 329. A mental sign of melancholy, Burton contends, is that the patient "dare not be alone in the dark, for fear of Hobgoblins and Devils: he suspects everything he hears or sees to be a Devil, or enchanted; and imagineth a thousand chimeras and visions, which to his thinking he certainly sees, bugbears, talks with black men, ghosts, goblins, etc."

[4] With the recent exceptions of critics such as Castle (1988, 1987) and Ariès (1981), historians of spiritualism and literary critics of occult literature, it seems to me, have not focused closely enough on the question of the psychological imperatives behind manifestations of nineteenth-century spiritualism, not to mention biological factors. Most attribute the spiritualist movement, in broad terms, to a general dialectical "reaction" (Briggs 52), "counter-reaction" (Finucane 175), or "antidote to relentless materialism . . . and unfeeling mechanization of modern society" (Reed 103).

[5] Freud, "Anxiety and Instinctual Life," SE 22: 81. In this chapter, I am, in other words, presuming mass neurosis as to a large extent the outcome of a real, external threat, as opposed to the intrapsychic conflicts perhaps more readily associated with neurosis. I will discuss the concept of anxiety and its role in symptom formation in more detail in sections four and five, below. A version of this chapter has been tentatively accepted for publication by Victorian Literature and Culture, and I would like to thank the editors, and particularly John Maynard, for encouraging me to develop this facet of my argument, and for referring me to the work of Rollo May.

[6] This applies, for instance, especially to such quasi-theologic treatises as John Neale's The Unseen World: Communications with It, Real

or Imaginary, 2nd ed. (London: 1853) or Newton Crosland's "new theophisic theory" of apparitions, Apparitions: An Essay Explanatory of Old Facts (London: 1873).

[7] This is not to suggest, though, that nineteenth-century medical writers necessarily advocated a naive materialistic credo of "seeing is believing." Many were convinced that "matter undoubtably exists in so fine, subtile [sic], and . . . spiritualized a state as to be imperceptible to human sense," and even willing to grant that such invisible matter "may affect us powerfully" (Maudsley, Natural Causes 175-76). They were simply unwilling to make the quantum leap from a belief in forms of invisible matter to a belief in forms of invisible spirit, an entity by definition immaterial. It is a "signal inconsistency," as Maudsley inveighed, with a sharp rap to the knuckles of "ghost seers and ghost seekers" one and all, "to make grossly sensible to eye in ghost form . . . a material agency the essential character of which is a tenuity too fine for the appreciation of the senses" (Natural Causes 175-76).

[8] The Philosophy of Mystery [London, 1841], 55-56, qtd. by Castle, "Phantasmagoria" 57. As Castle suggests, arguments such as Dendy's, which posited only "a difference of degree," not "essence," between ghosts and mental concepts, led directly to "the spectralization or 'ghostifying' of mental space"--a metaphor she compellingly traces into the early nineteenth century (57, 29). In this respect, she argues, "[t]he rationalists did not so much negate the traditional spirit world as displace it into the realm of psychology. Ghosts were not exorcized--only internalized and reinterpreted as hallucinatory thoughts" (52).

[9] In a passage instructive to read in light of Jung's comment on conscious rationality as a form of "apotropaic defense against superstition," Maudsley expounds his theory that any tendency to revert to supernatural beliefs would be "instantly and unconsciously controlled by a silent process of inhibition, owing to the positive knowledge incorporate in the structure of the well-balanced and fairly cultured brain." The "modern day disbelief in ghosts" is attributed to the fact that "as the region of the positively known increases, the region of the possible and wonderful decreases" (Natural Causes 200).

[10] In this respect, the late-century researchers appear precursors of modern psychiatric thought, which also advances (amongst others) a "continuity theory" and a general semiology of perception. See Siegel and West 257-86, and Bernard and Trouve 211-13.

[11] For a treatment of this question in the literary context of Henry James's heroine, Verena Tarrant, in The Bostonians, see my "A Jamesian Vision of 'American Nervousness'" (1989).

[12] Villette, ed. Mark Lilly and intro. Tony Tanner (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979) ch. 22, 235. Subsequent references to the text are taken from this edition and will be parenthetically cited by page number.

[13] Sally Shuttleworth notes that in Villette, "Brontë offers . . . a thorough materialization of the self" (331), but based on the heroine's temporary hallucinogenic experience during the final fête night, she concludes that the novel ultimately "dissolves the divisions between inner and outer realms" and in this way "suggests an alternative vision to male definitions of the Real" and "male materialism" (332).

[14] I am indebted to Theodore R. Sarbin and Joseph B. Juhasz for the following passage on the etymological history of "reality":

> [W]here biological survival depended on the ability to differentiate things from shadows, mirages, optical illusions, words, rememberings, dreams, and imaginings, to be 'in touch with reality' meant only that the individual did not embrace wood nymphs, or bump into trees, horses, or people. Thus the original use of the word 'reality' was in the service of denoting the world of ponderable things. (qtd. in Siegel and West 248)

[15] This reading confirms Mary Jacobus's argument that Brontë's realist novel is "formally fissured" by the "buried letter of Romanticism" which manifests itself as a subversive challenge to the claims of empirical reality. See ch. II, Reading Woman 41-61.

[16] See also Castle, "Spectralization of the Other," 1987.

[17] Wuthering Heights, ed. Ian Jack (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1976) II:xv, 289-90.

[18] In his early writings, Freud, in fact, used the two terms "indifferently, almost as equivalents," as James Strachey notes (SE 14:144). On the theoretic permutations of the concepts of repression and defense in Freud's work, see also Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy 138-41.

[19] It is worthwhile to note that Freud perceived such defensive value not only in occult projections of ghosts and spirits, but also in psychotic hallucinations: "the delusory formation which we take to be the pathological product, is in reality an attempt at recovery, a process of reconstruction" (SE 12:71).

[20] Indeed, Freud termed anxiety "the fundamental phenomenon and main problem of neurosis" (SE 20: 144). A useful overview of the direction of Freud's thought on the interrelationship between anxiety and symptoms is provided by Rollo May 1950, 112-27.

[21] A similar conceit is voiced in "Anxiety and Instinctual Life": "It was not the repression that created the anxiety; the anxiety was there earlier; it was the anxiety that made the repression" (SE 22: 86).

[22] "It must be confessed," Freud admits, "that we were not prepared to find that internal instinctual danger would turn out to be a determinant and preparation for an external, real, situation of danger" (SE 22: 86). A further problematization of the distinction between

neurotic and realistic anxiety is provided in the addendum to "Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety," "Supplementary Remarks on Anxiety," (SE 20: 164-68).

[23] "This same trend toward seeing the anxious individual in a struggle with his environment," May continues, "is indicated in the increasing prominence in Freud's later writing of the phrase 'danger-situation' rather than merely 'danger'" (126).

[24] On the ambivalence of human attitudes towards mortality, see, for example, the latter half of Freud's essay "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death" (1915), SE 14: 289-300.

[25] See Ariès, The Hour of Our Death, esp. chs. 10 and 11, 409-74, 475-556, and 405-06. Ariès's work was first published in French in 1977 as L'Homme devant la Mort, and presents a sweeping study of changing attitudes toward death in Western culture since the Middle Ages.

[26] Indeed, by inadvertently suggesting just how unavoidable this horrific disease was for the Victorians, the very title of Blanc's treatise, Cholera: How to Avoid It and Treat It, substantiates the grounds for the "deadly fear" it inspired.

[27] The rise of the popular press in the nineteenth century is one factor which distinguishes the phenomena of epidemics during the era from those of previous ages. All the major cholera outbreaks, in 1831-32, 1848-49, 1853-54, and 1866-67, were well publicized, resulting in an unprecedented awareness of the high mortality rates (Wohl 118).

[28] In addition to their defensive relevance as metaphorical substitutes for biological defenses, nineteenth-century representations of the ghostly anti-body, in literature, art, and photography, or "phantasmagoria" performances, may have served to help "bind" or "contain" a literally "free-floating" source of dis-ease. For contagious disease, as an essentially imperceptible and amorphous external threat, comprises, in a way, the basis of a paradoxically objectless objective fear. The ghostly anti-body thus afforded "protection against the anxiety-creating situation" in the same manner as does the neurotic symptom:

> When [a] conscious struggle can no longer be tolerated, either because of its increasing severity or because of its lack of success [or resolution], symptomatic changes in the organism take place. These relieve the strain of the conflict and make a quasi- or pseudo-adjustment possible when the conflict cannot actually be solved. Thus it may be said that . . . symptoms are often ways of containing . . . anxiety; they are anxiety in structuralized form . . . . [We recall] Freud's remark about psychological symptoms: 'The symptom is bound anxiety.' (May 84)

[29] Though the principle of acquired immunity is a discovery of the late nineteenth century, the concept itself dates back even beyond Edward Jenner's discovery of cowpox vaccination in 1798, and the

introduction of inoculation against smallpox by the Royal Society's "Experiment on Immunity" in 1721-22. However, the idea and term "immunity," as Arthur Silverstein notes, did not gain great currency until the 1880s and 1890s (1). It was not until 1880 that Pasteur discovered (by chance!) the antibody against chicken cholera; another three years elapsed before Koch succeeded in isolating the disease bacillus (Silverstein 327-28). Even at that later date, the concept of "polluting" immunization was actively resisted by factions of both the lay and scientific communities--with almost as much energy, in fact, as were some of Freud's controversial new theories. See also Wohl 132-35.

[30] The recoil of late-nineteenth-century scientists from the frightening implications of the concept of autotoxicity is discussed by Silverstein, Ch. 7, 160-89 and 214-15. Silverstein attributes their resistance of the "almost oxymoronic" notion of "immunological disease" to the offense it gave "the general Darwinian teleological view of a benign immune apparatus" (215).

[31] See "Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety," SE 20: 98. Though Freud seems cognizant of the "danger . . . of exaggerating the importance" of biopsychological parallels in this respect, he cannot help but indulge the fantasy, however improbable, of the "ideal solution" to neurotic disorders, "which medical men no doubt still yearn for": "to discover some bacillus which could be isolated and bred in a pure culture and which, when injected into anyone, would invariably produce the same illness; or to put it rather less extravagantly, to demonstrate the existence of certain chemical substances the administration of which would bring about or cure particular neuroses" (SE 20: 99, 153). In pointing out these parallels, I think it is also worth bearing in mind the generally close interrelationship among the sciences at the time: the theories of the immunologists, "grounded upon general biological principles derived from other fields," saw "their implications carried over to scientific disciplines well beyond the boundaries of immunology" (Silverstein 305). One of those related "scientific disciplines" was neurophysiology, Freud's early speciality and undoubtedly a formative influence on his thinking.

[32] "The Sphinx," in Collected Works of Edgar Allen Poe: Tales and Sketches, 1843-49, ed. Thomas O. Mabbott, vol. 3 (Cambridge, MA; London, Eng.: Belknap Press, 1978) 1246. Subsequent references to the text are taken from this edition. A different perspective on Poe's tale is offered by G. R. Thompson 1973, 174.

[33] For different perspectives on the subject of taphephobia, see Aries 396-403, and Freud's comment on fears of premature burial in "The Uncanny," SE 17: 217-52.

[34] Chiara Briganti, "The Monstrous Actress: Esther Summerson's Spectral Name," Dickens Studies Annual 19 (1990): 211. Briganti's interesting essay explores Esther's "haunted narrative": just as the heroine's "spectral name" is haunted by the subversive figure of Vashti--the Biblical Esther's predecessor--so is her narrative implicated, through an uncanny "process of feminine filiation" in a web of "guilt and . . . untrammelled [feminine] desire" that stretches to

her through the histories of Lady Leicester Dedlock and Lady Morbury Dedlock (215, 220).

[35] Bleak House, ed. George Ford and Sylvère Monod (New York: Norton, 1977) ch. 36, 454. Subsequent references are taken from this edition.

[36] The Turn of the Screw, ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: Norton, 1966) ch. 9, 40. Subsequent references to the text are taken from this edition.

[37] James's letter of December 19, 1898, is reprinted in Kimbrough's Norton Critical Edition of The Turn of the Screw 112.

[38] Wohl 129. Ninety-five percent of all cases of scarlet fever, Wohl notes, involved children under ten years of age. See Wohl's Chapter Two, 10-42 passim, for more on "The Massacre of the Innocents" by contagious disease during the period.

[39] Moby-Dick, or The Whale, ed. Luther Mansfield and Howard Vincent (New York: Hendricks House, 1962) ch. 125, 514. Subsequent references are taken from this edition.

[40] Bruce Haley has observed that "the practice [of homeopathy] was curiously analogous to inoculation; homeopathic doctors carried with them cases of medicines, from which they would administer minute doses of whatever could produce symptoms resembling those of the disease being treated" (13).

[41] Ghosts, in Henrik Ibsen: Four Major Plays, trans. James McFarlane and Jens Arup, intro. by James McFarlane (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981) 138, 161. Subsequent references are taken from this edition.

[42] Essay subtitle in the popular scientific journal Discover, Sept., 1986, qtd. in Gilman 259.

[43] "Mystics in Our Midst," Elle, August, 1991, 54.

Chapter Seven

[1] Lacan's conception of the ghost as a "hole in the Real," a symbolic token of absence or loss associated with the castration complex, is most comprehensively discussed in his essay "Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet," reprinted in Literature and Psychoanalysis, ed. Shoshana Felman (1982): 11-52. Besides Shoshana Felman, whose theory of the ghosts in James's The Turn of the Screw as "writing and reading effect[s]" will be discussed in detail below, critics offering similar interpretations include Marjorie Garber, Shakespeare's Ghost Writers (1987); Daniel Sibony, "Hamlet: A Writing Effect," in Literature and Psychoanalysis, ed. Shoshana Felman (1982): 53-93; and (less explicitly Lacanian in tenor) Margaret Ferguson,

"Hamlet: Letters and Spirits," in the Norton Critical edition of Hamlet, ed. Cyrus Hoy (1992): 246-62.

[2] Henry James, The Turn of the Screw, ed. Robert Kimbrough (New York: Norton, 1966) 4. Subsequent references are to this edition.

[3] See Peter Beidler (1989), whose well-documented and compelling argument for the demonic possession of Miles and Flora is weakened only by his adamant insistence "that there is a correct way to read [even] a work as rich and ambiguous as The Turn of the Screw" (239). Besides the textual evidence, as Beidler and others have surveyed, this line of argument is supported by the close parallels between the shocking death of Miles at the end of the novella and the scriptural account of demonic exorcism found in Mark 9:17-27. For a contemporary update of the Wilsonian reading, see Renner, "Sexual Hysteria" (1988).

[4] "James seems consistently to be trying to make us uncertain about the status of what the Governess writes," MacLeod concludes (154). He shows in detail how James's style "embodies both objective and subjective dimensions" through its dependence on forms of "neutralised . . . nominalisation" such as "'what determined me,'" as opposed to "'I determined'" or "'something determined me'" (149, 142).

[5] See also Dorothy Krook (1973):

> There is in fact no episode, dialogue, or utterance, comment, or reflection in the story that does not admit of two contradictory interpretations, one consistent with the supposition that the governess is insane or neurotic, . . . the other consistent with the supposition . . . that she is essentially what she appears to be: a Jamesian saviour-figure, who is endeavouring to save two beautiful, gifted children from a nameless evil figured in the haunting apparitions. (26)

Krook argues that the furthest implication of Jamesian ambiguity is that the reader must make "momentous decisions and choices" in blindness, as "an act of faith" (34-35).

[6] This essay first appeared in English in Yale French Studies 55 (1977). It constitutes the bulk (and most acclaimed portion) of Writing and Madness (1985), and has also been reprinted in, amongst other sources, Felman's Literature and Psychoanalysis.

[7] Felman's conception of the ghost as "a writing- and a reading-effect" (WM 195) is a compelling one pervasively apparent in a range of nineteenth-century fiction--and beyond. In Wilkie Collins's The Woman in White (intro. Frederick R. Karl [New York: New American Library, 1985]), for example, the central narrator, Walter Hartright, recounts a similar "ghost-effect" or after-image of Anne Catherick after a spell of night-time reading and sketching: the image of "the woman in white," as he puts it, "got between me and my pencil, between me and my book" (41). Similarly, in Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights (ed. and intro. Ian Jack [Oxford: OUP, 1981]), Lockwood's dream of the ghost child is immediately

preceded by his drowsy perusal of Catherine's diaries; the "ghost" of her name appears literally as a "dream induced by letters" (Felman 1985, 197): a "glare of white letters" that start "from the dark as vivid as spectres" (17). In sister Charlotte's Villette (intro. Susan Fromberg Schaeffer [Toronto: Bantam Books, 1986]), Lucy Snowe also associates letter writing and reading with spectral apparitions: "the dreaded hour, the post-hour," she remarks, "was nearing, and I sat waiting it, much as a ghost-seer might wait his spectre" (259). But it is perhaps Franz Kafka, in his personal correspondence, who most astutely and precisely anticipates Felman's theory:

> The easy feasibility of letter writing must have produced--purely from a theoretical perspective--a horrible dislocation of souls in the world. It is surely a communication with spectres, and not only with the spectre of the addressee, but also with one's own ghost, which is engendered beneath one's own hand, in the very letter one is writing, or even in a series of letters, in which one letter reinforces the other and can refer to it as a witness. (my translation)

See Franz Kafka, Briefe an Milena, afterword by Willy Haas (New York: Schocken Books, 1952) 259-60.

[8] Leon Edel, for example, accurately refers to Mrs Grose as a "kind of semi-articulate chorus in the story" (4: 203), but the Governess and Miles are equally compulsive verbal reverberators. Indeed, in developing the echo-effect to the extent that he does in The Turn of the Screw, James presents readers with an aural equivalent to the way his characters also "mirror" one another; they are, essentially, as much one another's sounding boards as they are reflections of each other.

[9] "She is all the time trying to climb through," says Gilman's narrator of the first such hallucinatory figure. "But nobody could climb through that pattern--it strangles so." No-bodies can indeed "climb through that pattern, as we learn, but only to be strangled off in the process: "They get through, and then the pattern strangles them off and turns them upside down, and makes their eyes white!" ("YW" 30).

[10] Recent treatments of "The Yellow Wallpaper" as a ghost story include an interpretation of the narrator's madness as an instance of demonic possession; see E. Suzanne Owens, "The Ghostly Double behind the Wallpaper in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 'The Yellow Wallpaper,'" in Haunting the House of Fiction, ed. Lynette Carpenter and Wendy K. Kolmar (1992): 64-79.

[11] The attitude of dreams to the category of antithesis and contradiction, as Freud notes in The Interpretation of Dreams, "is highly remarkable":

> [This category] is simply disregarded. 'No' seems not to exist so far as dreams are concerned. They show a particular preference for combining contraries into a unity or for representing them as one and the same thing. Dreams feel themselves at liberty, moreover, to represent any element by

> its wishful contrary; so that there is no way of deciding at a first glance whether any element that admits of a contrary is present in the dream-thoughts as a positive or as a negative. (SE 4: 318)

In the same way, to the extent that James's ghostly "nobodies" in effect ignore their own prefix--for their negative definition simultaneously constitutes their means of (positive) self-affirmation--they can also be understood to know no "no" as such, and reduce antithesis into "one and the same thing."

[12] Insofar as the eventual outcome of the Governess's challenge of Flora is a temporary blackout by the lake--a "wildness of grief" of which she has "no subsequent memory" (73)--the alienating effect of her "monstrous utterance" extends to self as well as other; it is a fit of self-estrangement that illustrates her continued propensity to "break down" in such attempts at articulation.

[13] It is indeed precisely such a "performative mode of materializing a figure, with its grim effects of tragic irony" that Ferguson traces in Hamlet. Not only does Hamlet, in the closet scene of Act III "speak daggers" to his mother and literally stab Polonius, as Ferguson notes, but the murder of Polonius also materializes a figure of speech earlier employed by the Prince: "'It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf,' Hamlet had punningly remarked . . . of Polonius's fate when he played Julius Caesar in a university theatrical." When he kills him, he "realizes" that insult, "transforming the old man into a sacrificial calf on another stage" ("Hamlet: Letters and Spirits," in Hamlet, ed. Cyrus Hoy [1992]: 250, 254). Ferguson's essay is reprinted from Shakespeare and the Question of Theory, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (1985) 292-309.

[14] "Irony," as Baer suggests, "is the trope of double meaning, double entendre,, of double talk, and in this sense of double semiosis" (Medical Semiotics 91).

[15] "Every figure is translatable," as Gerard Genette remarks, "and bears its translation, transparently visible, like a watermark, or a palimpsest, beneath its apparent text. Rhetoric is bound up with this duplicity of language" (50).

[16] Of course, "even the simplest and most common" words and phrases, as Genette observes, "possess a [certain] form": "sounds follow one another in a certain way (in a certain order) to form this word, words follow one another to form this sentence," and so forth. "But this form," he emphasizes,

> is purely grammatical, it concerns morphology, syntax, but not rhetoric . . . . The rhetorical fact begins where I am able to compare one form of this word or sentence to that of another word or sentence that might have been used in their place and which could be regarded as standing for them. (49)

[17] Felman, it should be noted, arrives at the conclusion that "rhetoric is nothing other than a mode of contradiction" (89) within language, and especially literary language, by a somewhat different route than the one I have traced; see Writing and Madness, esp. ch. 4, 78-100.

[18] In the sense that the rhetorical trope, like the figure of a ghost, "bear[s] presence and absence simultaneously," its functioning is indeed inherently uncanny. Modifications of meaning always negatively defined by their absent terms, the value of a figure, to paraphrase James, is one of a "positive blank." For the "value of the figure is not given in the words that make it up, since it depends on the gap between those words and those that the reader perceives, mentally, beyond them, 'in a perpetual supersession of the written thing'" (Genette 50, 54).

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